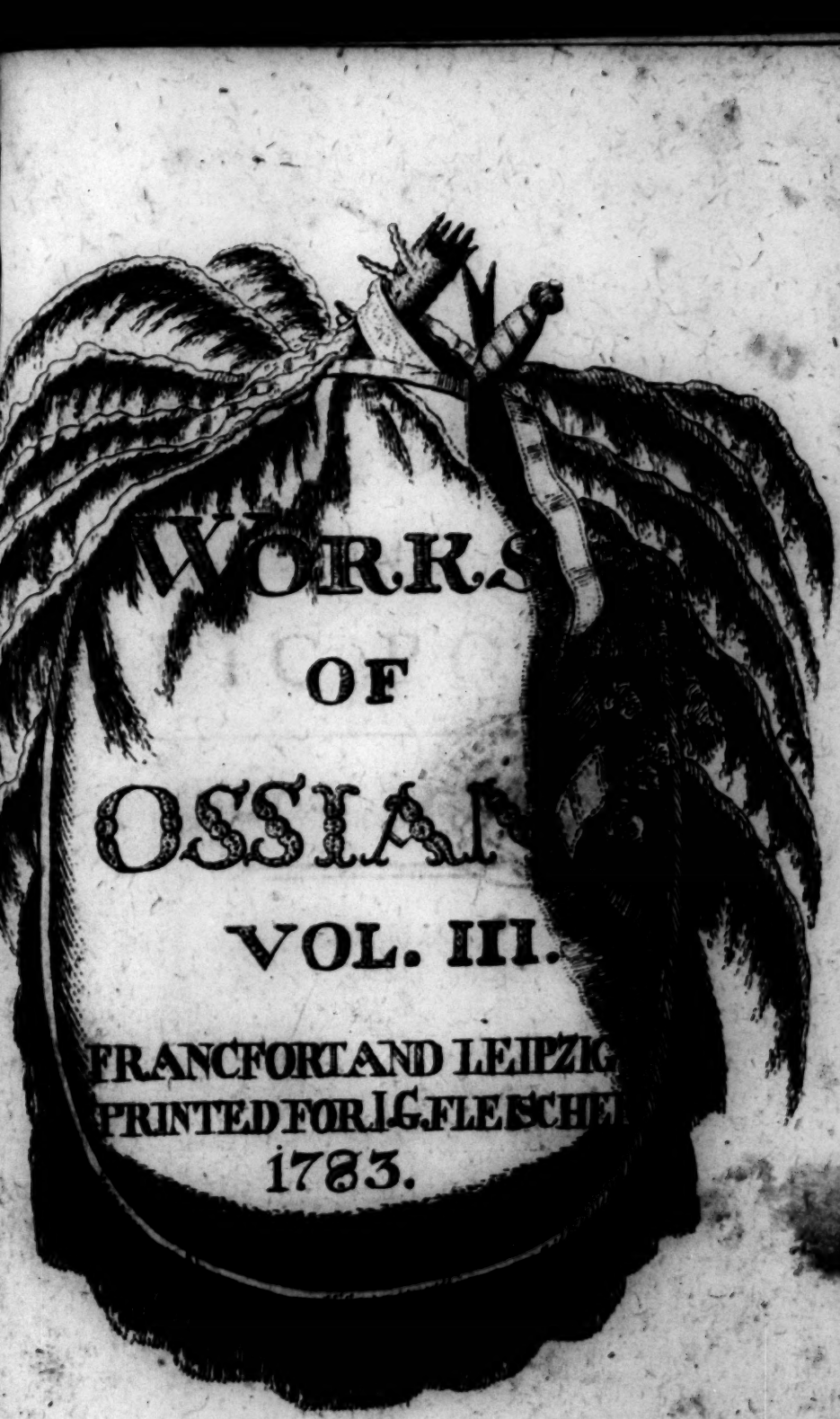

WORKS
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BRITISH MUSEUM

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK FIRST.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ARGUMENT to Book I.

Cairbar, the ſon of Borbar-duthul, lord of Atha in Connaught, the moſt potent chief of the race of the Firbolg, having murdered, at Temora the royal palace, Cormac the ſon of Artho, the young king of Ireland, uſurped the throne. Cormac was lineally deſcended from Conat the ſon of Trenmor, the great grandfather of Fingal, king of thoſe Caledonians, who inhabited the weſtern coaſt of Scotland. Fingal reſented the behaviour of Cairbar, and reſolved to paſs over into Ireland, with an army, to re-eſtabliſh the royal family on the Iriſh throne. Early intelligence of his deſigns coming to Cairbar, he aſſembled ſome of his tribes in Ulſter, and at the ſame time ordered his brother Cathmor, to follow him ſpeedily with an army, from Temora. Such was the ſituation of affairs, when the Caledonian fleet appeared on the coaſt of Ulſter.

The poem opens in the morning. Cairbar is repreſented as retired from the reſt of the army, when one of his ſcouts brought him news of the landing of Fingal. He aſſembles a council of his chiefs. Foldath the chief of Moma haughtily deſpiſes the enemy; and is reprimanded warmly by Malthos. Cairbar, after hearing their debate, orders a feaſt to be prepared, to which, by his bard Olla, he invites Oſcar the ſon of Oſſian; reſolving to pick a quarrel with that hero, and to have ſome pretext for killing him. Oſcar came to the feaſt; the quarrel happened: the followers of both fought, and Cairbar and Oſcar fell by mutual wounds. The noiſe of

ARGUMENT TO BOOK I.

the battle reached Fingal's army. The king came on, to the relief of Oscar, and the Irish fell back to the army of Cathmor, who was advanced to the banks of the river Lubar, on the heath of Moi-lena. Fingal, after mourning over his grandson, ordered Ullin the chief of his bards, to carry his body to Morven, to be there interred. Night coming on, Althan, the son of Conachar, relates to the king the particulars of the murder of Cormac. Fillan, the son of Fingal, is sent to observe the motions of Cathmor by night, which concludes the action of the first day. The scene of this book is a plain, near the hill of Mora, which rose on the borders of the heath of Moi-lena, in Ulster.

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TEMO-

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM *).

BOOK FIRST.

The blue waves of Ullin roll in light.
The green hills are covered with day.
Trees ſhake their duſky heads in the breeze.
Grey

*) The firſt book of Temora made its appearance in the collection of leſſer pieces, which were ſubjoined to the epic poem of Fingal. When that collection was printed, little more than the opening of the preſent poem came, in a regular connection, to my hands. The ſecond book, in particular, was very imperfect and confuſed. By means of my friends, I collected ſince all the broken fragments of Temora, that I formerly wanted; and the ſtory of the poem, which was accurately preſerved by many, enabled me to

Grey torrents pour their noiſy ſtreams. ——
Two green hills, with aged oaks, ſurround a nar-

reduce it into that order, in which it now appears. The title of Epic was impoſed on the poem by myſelf. The technical terms of criticiſm were totally unknown to Oſſian. Born in a diſtant age, and in a country remote from the ſeats of learning, his knowledge did not extend to Greek and Roman literature. If therefore, in the form of his poems, and in ſeveral paſſages of his diction, he reſembles Homer, the ſimilarity muſt proceed from nature, the original from which both drew their ideas. It is from this conſideration that I have avoided, in this volume, to give parallel paſſages from other authors, as I had done, in ſome of my notes, on the former collection of Oſſian's poems. It was far from my intention, to raiſe my author into a competition with the celebrated names of antiquity. The extenſive field of renown affords ample room to all the poetical merit, which has yet appeared in the world, without overturning the character of one poet, to raiſe that of another on its ruins. Had Oſſian even ſuperior merit to Homer and Virgil, a certain partiality, ariſing from the fame deſervedly beſtowed upon them by the ſanction of ſo many ages, would make us overlook it, and give them the prefe-

rence,

narrow plain. The blue courſe of a ſtream is there;

rence. Tho' their high merit does not ſtand in need of adventitious aid, yet it muſt be acknowledged, that it is an advantage to their fame, that the poſterity of the Greeks and Romans, either do not at all exiſt, or are not now objects of contempt or envy to the preſent age.

Tho' this poem of Oſſian has not perhaps all the *minutiae*, which Ariſtotle, from Homer, lays down as neceſſary to the conduct of an epic poem, yet, it is preſumed, it has all the grand eſſentials of the epopœa. Unity of time, place, and action is preſerved throughout. The poem opens in the midſt of things; what is neceſſary of preceding tranſactions to be known, is introduced by epiſodes afterwards; not formally brought in, but ſeemingly riſing immediately from the ſituation of affairs. The circumſtances are grand, and the diction animated; neither deſcending into a cold meanneſs, nor ſwelling into ridiculous bombaſt.

The reader will find ſome alterations in the diction of this book. Theſe are drawn from more correct copies of the original, which came to my hands, ſince the former publication. As the

there; on its banks ſtood Cairbar *) of Atha. —— His ſpear ſupports the king: the red eyes of his fear are ſad. Cormac riſes in his ſoul, with all his ghaſtly wounds. The grey form of the youth appears in darkneſs; blood pours from his airy ſides. —— Cairbar thrice threw his ſpear on earth; and thrice he ſtroked his beard. His ſteps are ſhort; he often ſtops; and toſſes his ſinewy arms. He is like a cloud in the deſart, that varies its form to every blaſt: the

moſt part of the poem is delivered down by tradition, the text is ſometimes various and interpolated. After comparing the different readings, I always made choice of that, which agreed beſt with the ſpirit of the context.

*) Cairbar, the ſon of Borbhar-duthul, was deſcended lineally from Larthon the chief of the Firbolg, the firſt colony who ſettled in the ſouth of Ireland. The Caël were in poſſeſſion of the northern coaſt of that kingdom, and the firſt monarchs of Ireland were of their race. Hence aroſe thoſe differences between the two nations, which terminated, at laſt, in the murder of Cormac, and the uſurpation of Cairbar, lord of Atha, who is mentioned in this place.

the valleys are ſad around, and fear, by turns, the ſhower.

The king, at length, reſumed his ſoul, and took his pointed ſpear. He turned his eyes to Moi-lena. The ſcouts of blue ocean came. They came with ſteps of fear, and often looked behind. Cairbar knew, that the mighty were near, and called his gloomy chiefs.

The ſounding ſteps of his warriors came. They drew, at once, their ſwords. There Morlath *) ſtood with darkened face. Hidalla's long hair ſighs in wind. Red-haired Cormac bends

*) Mor-lath, *great in the day of battle.* Hidalla', *mildly looking hero.* Cor-mac, *expert at ſea.* Malth-os, *ſlow to ſpeak.* Foldath, *generous.*

Foldath, who is here ſtrongly marked, makes a great figure in the ſequel of the poem. His fierce, uncomplying character is ſuſtained throughout. He ſeems, from a paſſage in the ſecond book, to have been Cairbar's greateſt confident, and to have had a principal hand in the conſpiracy againſt Cormac king of Ireland. His tribe was one of the moſt conſiderable of the race of the Fir-bolg.

bends on his ſpear, and rolls his ſide-long-looking eyes. Wild is the look of Malthos from beneath two ſhaggy brows. —— Foldath ſtands like an oozy rock, that covers its dark ſides with foam. His ſpear is like Slimora's fir, that meets the wind of heaven. His ſhield is marked with the ſtrokes of battle; and his red eye deſpiſes danger. Theſe and a thouſand other chiefs ſurrounded car-borne Cairbar, when the ſcout of ocean came, Mor-annal, from ſtreamy Moi-lena. —— His eyes hang forward from his face, his lips are trembling, pale.

Do the chiefs of Erin ſtand, he ſaid, ſilent as the grove of evening? Stand they, like a ſilent wood, and Fingal on the coaſt? Fingal, the terrible in battle, the king of ſtreamy Morven. —— Haſt thou ſeen the warrior? ſaid Cairbar with a ſigh. Are his heroes many on the coaſt? Lifts he the ſpear of battle? Or comes the king in peace?

In peace he comes not, Cairbar, I have ſeen his forward ſpear *). It is a meteor of death;

*) Mor-annal here alludes to the particular appearance of Fingal's ſpear. —— If a man, upon his

death: the blood of thouſands is on its ſteel. — He came firſt to the ſhore, ſtrong in the grey hair of age. Full roſe his ſinewy limbs, as he ſtrode in his might. That ſword is by his ſide, which gives no ſecond *) wound. His ſhield is terrible, like the bloody moon aſcending thro' a ſtorm. Then came Oſſian king of ſongs; and Morni's ſon, the firſt of men. Connal leaps forward on his ſpear: Dermid ſpreads his dark-brown locks. —— Fillan bends his bow, the young hunter of ſtreamy Moruth

his firſt landing in a ſtrange country, kept the point of his ſpear forward, it denoted in thoſe days, that he came in a hoſtile manner, and accordingly he was treated as an enemy; if he kept the point behind him, it was a token of friendſhip, and he was immediately invited to the feaſt, according to the hoſpitality of the times.

*) This was the famous ſword of Fingal, made by Luno, a ſmith of Lochlin, and after him poetically called the *ſon of Luno:* it is ſaid of this ſword, that it killed a man at every ſtroke; and that Fingal never uſed it, but in times of the greateſt danger.

uth *). —— But who is that before them, like the dreadful courſe of a ſtream? It is the ſon of Oſſian, bright between his locks. His long hair falls on his back. —— His dark brows are half incloſed in ſteel. His ſword hangs looſe on his ſide. His ſpear glitters, as he moves. I fled from his terrible eyes, king of high Temora.

Then fly, thou feeble man, ſaid Foldath in gloomy wrath: fly to the grey ſtreams of thy land, ſon of the little ſoul! Have not I ſeen that Oſcar? I beheld the chief in war. He is of the mighty in danger: but there are others who lift the ſpear. —— Erin has many ſons as brave, king of Temora of Groves! Let Foldath meet him in the ſtrength of his courſe, and ſtop this mighty ſtream. —— My ſpear is covered with the blood of the valiant; my ſhield is like the wall of Tura.

Shall

*) In ſome traditions Fergus the ſon of Fingal, and Usnoth chief of Etha, immediately follow Fillan in the liſt of the chiefs of Morven; but as they are not afterwards mentioned at all in the poem, I look upon the whole ſentence to be an interpolation, and have therefore rejected it.

——Shall Foldath *) alone meet the foe? replied the dark-browed Malthos. Are they not numerous on our coaſt, like the waters of many ſtreams? Are not theſe the chiefs, who vanquiſhed Swaran, when the ſons of Erin fled? And ſhall Foldath meet their braveſt heroes? Foldath of the heart of pride! take the ſtrength of the people; and let Malthos come. My ſword is red with ſlaughter, but who has heard my words **)?

Sons of green Erin, ſaid Hidalla ***), let not Fingal hear your words. The foe might re-

*) The oppoſite characters of Foldath and Malthos are ſtrongly marked in ſubſequent parts of the poem. They appear always in oppoſition. The feuds between their families, which were the ſource of their hatred to one another, are mentioned in other poems.

**) That is, who has heard my vaunting? He intended the expreſſion as a rebuke to the ſelf-praiſe of Foldath.

***) Hidalla was the chief of Clonra, a ſmall diſtrict on the banks of the lake of Lego. The beauty of his perſon, his eloquence and genius for poetry, are afterwards mentioned.

rejoice, and his arm be ſtrong in the land. —— Ye are brave, o warriors, and like the ſtorms of the deſart; they meet the rocks without fear, and overturn the woods. — But let us move in our ſtrength, flow as a gathered cloud. —— Then ſhall the mighty tremble; the ſpear ſhall fall from the hand of the valiant. — We ſee the cloud of death, they will ſay, while ſhadows fly over their face. Fingal will mourn in his age, and ſee his flying fame. — The ſteps of his chiefs will ceaſe in Morven: the moſs of years ſhall grow in Selma.

Cairbar heard their words, in ſilence, like the cloud of a ſhower: it ſtands dark on Cromla, till the lightning burſts its ſides: the valley gleams with red light; the ſpirits of the ſtorm rejoice. —— So ſtood the ſilent king of Temora; at length his words are heard.

Spread the feaſt on Moi-lena; let my hundred bards attend. Thou, red-hair'd Olla, take the harp of the king. Go to Oſcar chief of ſwords, and bid him to our feaſt. To-day we feaſt and hear the ſong; to-morrow break the ſpears. Tell him, that I have raiſed

raiſed the tomb of Cathol *); that bards have ſung to his ghoſt. —— Tell him that Cairbar has heard his fame at the ſtream of reſounding Carun **). Cathmor ***) is not here, Borbarduthul's

*) Cathol the ſon of Maronnan, or Moran, was murdered by Cairbar, for his attachment to the family of Cormac. He had attended Oſcar to the *war of Inis-thina*, where they contracted a great friendſhip for one another. Oſcar immediately after the death of Cathol, had ſent a formal challenge to Cairbar, which he prudently declined, but conceived a ſecret hatred againſt Oſcar, and had beforehand contrived to kill him at the feaſt, to which he here invites him.

**) He alludes to the battle of Oſcar againſt Caros, *king of ſhips*; who is ſuppoſed to be the ſame with Carauſius the uſurper.

***) Cathmor, *great in battle*, the ſon of Borbarduthul, and brother of Cairbar king of Ireland, had, before the inſurrection of the Firbolg, paſſed over into Inis-huna, ſuppoſed to be a part of South-Britain, to aſſiſt Conmor king of that place, againſt his enemies. Cathmor was ſucceſsful in the war, but, in the courſe of it, Conmor was either killed, or died a natural death. Cairbar, upon intelligence of the deſigns of Fingal to dethrone him, had diſpatched a meſſen-

duthul's generous race. He is not here with his thouſands, and our arms are weak. Cathmor is a foe to ſtrife at the feaſt: his ſoul is bright as that ſun. But Cairbar ſhall fight with Oſcar, chief of the woody Temora! His words for Cathol were many; the wrath of Cairbar burns. He ſhall fall on Moi-lena: my fame ſhall riſe in blood.

Their faces brightened round with joy. They ſpread over Moi-lena. The feaſt of ſhells is prepared. The ſongs of bards ariſe. We heard *) the voice of joy on the coaſt: we thought

ger for Cathmor, who returned into Ireland a few days before the opening of the poem.

Cairbar here takes advantage of his brother's abſence, to perpetrate his ungenerous deſigns againſt Oſcar; for the noble ſpirit of Cathmor, had he been preſent, would not have permitted, the laws of that hoſpitality, for which he was ſo renowned himſelf, to be violated. The brothers form a contraſt: we do not deteſt the mean ſoul of Cairbar more, than we admire the diſintereſted and generous mind of Cathmor.

(*) Fingal's army heard the joy that was in Cairbar's camp. The character given of Cathmor is agreeable to the times. Some, through oſtentation,

thought that mighty Cathmor came. Cathmor the friend of ſtrangers! the brother of red-haired

tion, were hoſpitable; and others fell naturally into a cuſtom handed down from their anceſtors. But what marks ſtrongly the character of Cathmor, is his averſion to praiſe; for he is repreſented to dwell in a wood, to avoid the thanks of his gueſts; which is ſtill a higher degree of generoſity, than that of Axylus in Homer: for the poet does not ſay, but the good man might, at the head of his own table, have heard with pleaſure the praiſe beſtowed on him by the people he entertained.

No nation in the world carried hoſpitality to a greater length, than the ancient Scots. It was even infamous, for many ages, in a man of condition, to have the door of his houſe ſhut at all: LEST, as the bards expreſs it, THE STRANGER SHOULD COME AND BEHOLD HIS CONTRACTED SOUL. Some of the chiefs were poſſeſſed of this hoſpitable diſpoſition to an extravagant degree; and the bards, perhaps upon a ſelfiſh account, never failed to recommend it, in their eulogiums. *Cean-nia' na dai'*, or *the point, to which all the roads of the ſtrangers lead*, was an invariable epithet given by them to the chiefs; on the contrary, they diſtinguiſhed the inhoſpi-

ed Cairbar. Their ſouls were not the ſame. The light of heaven was in the boſom of Cathmor.

table by the title of *the cloud which the ſtrangers ſhun.* This laſt however was ſo uncommon, that in all the old poems, I have ever met with, I found but one man branded with this ignominious appellation; and that, perhaps, only founded upon a private quarrel, which ſubſiſted between him and the patron of the bard, who wrote the poem.

We have a ſtory of this hoſpitable nature, handed down by tradition, concerning one of the firſt Earls of Argyle. This nobleman, hearing that an Iriſhman, of great quality, intended to make him a viſit, with a very numerous retinue of his friends and dependants, burnt the caſtle of Dunora, the ſeat of his family, leſt it ſhould be too ſmall to entertain his gueſts, and received the Iriſh in tents on the ſhore. Extravagant as this behaviour might ſeem in our days, it was admired and applauded in thoſe times of hoſpitality, and the Earl acquired conſiderable fame by it, in the ſongs of the bards.

The open communication with one another, which was the conſequence of their hoſpitality, did not a little tend to improve the underſtanding and

mor. His towers roſe on the banks of Atha: ſeven paths led to his halls. Seven chiefs ſtood on

and enlarge the ideas of the ancient Scots. It is to this cauſe, we muſt attribute that ſagacity and ſenſe, which the common people, in the highlands, poſſeſs, ſtill, in a degree ſuperior even to the vulgar of more poliſhed countries. When men are crowded together in great cities, they ſee indeed many people, but are acquainted with few. They naturally form themſelves into ſmall ſocieties, and their knowledge ſcarce extends beyond the alley or ſtreet they live in; add to this that the very employment of a mechanic tends to contract the mind. The ideas of a peaſant are ſtill more confined. His knowledge is circumſcribed within the compaſs of a few acres; or, at moſt, extends no further than the neareſt market-town. The manner of life among the inhabitants of the highlands is very different from theſe. As their fields are barren, they have ſcarce any domeſtic employment. Their time is ſpent therefore in an extenſive wilderneſs, where they feed their cattle, and theſe, by ſtraying far and wide, carry their keepers after them, at times, to all the different ſettlements of the clans. There they are received with hoſpitality and good cheer; which, as they tend to display the minds of the hoſts, afford an opportunity to the gueſts

on the paths, and called the ſtranger to the feaſt. But Cathmor dwelt in the wood, to avoid the voice of praiſe.

Olla came with his ſongs. Oſcar went to Cairbar's feaſt. Three hundred warriors ſtrode along Moi-lena of the ſtreams. The grey dogs bounded on the heath, their howling reached afar. Fingal ſaw the departing hero: the ſoul of the king was ſad. He dreaded Cairbar's gloomy thoughts, amidſt the feaſt of ſhells.

My ſon raiſed high the ſpear of Cormac: an hundred bards met him with ſongs. Cairbar concealed with ſmiles the death, that was dark in his ſoul. The feaſt is ſpread, the ſhells reſound: joy brightens the face of the hoſt. But it was like the parting beam of the ſun, when he is to hide his red head in a ſtorm.

Cairbar

to make their obſervations on the different characters of men; which is the true ſource of knowledge and acquired ſenſe. Hence it is that a common highlander is acquainted with a greater number of characters, than any of his own rank living in the moſt populous cities.

Cairbar roſe in his arms; darkneſs gathered on his brow. The hundred harps ceaſed at once. The clang *) of ſhields was heard. Far diſtant on the heath Olla raiſed his ſong of woe. My ſon knew the ſign of death; and riſing ſeized his ſpear.

Oſcar! ſaid the dark-red Cairbar, I behold the ſpear **) of Inisfail. The ſpear of Temora *) glitters in thy hand, ſon of woody Morven!

*) When a chief was determined to kill a perſon already in his power, it was uſual to ſignify that his death was intended, by the ſound of a ſhield ſtruck with the blunt end of a ſpear; at the ſame time that a bard at a diſtance raiſed the *death-ſong*. A ceremony of another kind was long uſed in Scotland upon ſuch occaſions. Every body has heard, that a bull's head was ſerved up to Lord Douglas in the caſtle of Edinburgh, as a certain ſignal of his approaching death.

**) Cormac, the ſon of Arth, had given the ſpear, which is here the foundation of the quarrel, to Oſcar, when he came to congratulate him, upon Swaran's being expelled from Ireland.

*) Ti-mor-rath, *the houſe of good fortune*, the name of the royal palace of the ſupreme kings of Ireland.

ven! It was the pride of an hundred **) kings, the death of heroes of old. Yield it, ſon of Oſſian, yield it to car-borne Cairbar.

Shall I yield, Oſcar replied, the gift of Erin's injured king; the gift of fair-haired Cormac, when Oſcar ſcattered his foes? I came to Cormac's halls of joy, when Swaran fled from Fingal. Gladneſs roſe in the face of youth: he gave the ſpear of Temora. Nor did he give it to the feeble, o Cairbar, neither to the weak in ſoul. The darkneſs of thy face is no ſtorm to me; nor are thine eyes the flames of death. Do I fear thy clanging ſhield? Tremble I at Olla's ſong? No: Cairbar, frighten the feeble; Oſcar is a rock.

And wilt thou not yield the ſpear? replied the riſing pride of Cairbar. Are thy words ſo mighty,

**) *Hundred* here is an indefinite number, and is only intended to expreſs a great many. It was probably the hyperbolical phraſes of bards, that gave the firſt hint to the Iriſh Senachies, to place the origin of their monarchy in ſo remote a period, as they have done.

mighty, becauſe Fingal is near? Fingal with aged locks, from Morven's hundred groves! He has fought with little men. But he muſt vaniſh before Cairbar, like a thin pillar of miſt before the winds of Atha *).

Were he who fought with little men, near Atha's darkening chief: Atha's darkening chief would yield green Erin to his rage. Speak not of the mighty, o Cairbar! but turn thy ſword on me. Our ſtrength is equal: but Fingal is renowned! the firſt of mortal men!

Their people ſaw the darkening chiefs. Their crowding ſteps are heard around. Their eyes roll in fire. A thouſand ſwords are half-unſheathed. Red-haired Olla raiſed the ſong of battle: the trembling joy of Oſcar's ſoul aroſe; the wonted joy of his ſoul, when Fingal's horn was heard.

Dark as the ſwelling wave of ocean before the riſing winds, when it bends its head near a coaſt,

*) Atha, *ſhallow river*: the name of Cairbar's ſeat in Connaught.

a coaſt, came on the hoſt of Cairbar. —— Daughter of Toſcar *)! why that tear? He is not fallen yet. Many were the deaths of his arm, before my hero fell! —— Behold, they fall before my ſon, like the groves in the deſart, when an angry ghoſt ruſhes through night, and takes their green heads in his hand! Morlath falls: Maronnan dies; Conachar trembles in his blood. Cairbar ſhrinks before Oſcar's ſword; and creeps in darkneſs behind his ſtone. He lifted the ſpear in ſecret, and pierced my Oſcar's ſide. He falls forward on his ſhield: his knee ſuſtains the chief. But ſtill his ſpear is in his hand. —— See, gloomy Cairbar **) falls! The ſteel pierced his forehead, and divided his red hair behind. He lay, like a ſhatter-

ed

*) The poet means Malvina, the daughter of Toſcar, to whom he addreſſes that part of the poem, which relates to the death of Oſcar her lover.

**) The Iriſh hiſtorians place the death of Cairbar, in the latter end of the third century: they ſay, he was killed in battle againſt Oſcar the ſon of Oſſian, but deny that he fell by his hand. As they have nothing to go upon, but the traditions of their bards, the tranſlator thinks that the ac-

count

ed rock, which Cromla ſhakes from its ſhaggy ſide. But never more ſhall Oſcar riſe! he leans on

count of Oſſian is as probable; at the worſt, it is but oppoſing one tradition to another.

It is, however, certain, that the Iriſh hiſtorians diſguiſe, in ſome meaſure, this part of their hiſtory. An Iriſh poem on this ſubject, which, undoubtedly, was the ſource of their information, concerning the battle of Gabhra, where Cairbar fell, is juſt now in my hands. The circumſtances are leſs to the diſadvantage of the character of Cairbar, than thoſe related by Oſſian. As a tranſlation of the poem (which, tho' evidently no very ancient compoſition, does not want poetical merit) would extend this note to too great a length, I ſhall only give the ſtory of it, in brief, with ſome extracts from the original Iriſh.

Oſcar, ſays the Iriſh bard, was invited to a feaſt, at Temora, by Cairbar king of Ireland. A diſpute aroſe between the two heroes, concerning the exchange of ſpears, which was uſually made, between the gueſts and their hoſt, upon ſuch occaſions. In the courſe of their altercation, Cairbar ſaid, in a boaſtful manner, that he would hunt on the hills of Albin, and carry the

on his boſſy ſhield. His ſpear is in his terrible hand: Erin's ſons ſtood diſtant and dark. Their ſhouts

the ſpoils of it into Ireland, in ſpite of all the efforts of its inhabitants. The original words are:

Briathar buan ſin; Briathar buan
A bheireadh an Cairbre rua',
Gu tuga' ſe ſealg, agus creach
A h'Albin an la'r na mhaireach.

Oſcar replied, that, the next day, he himſelf would carry into Albin the ſpoils of the five provinces of Ireland, in ſpite of the oppoſition of Cairbar.

Briathar eile an aghal' ſin
A bheirea' an t'Oſcar, og, calma
Gu'n tugad ſe ſealg agus creach
Do dh'Albin an la'r na mhaireach, &c.

Oſcar, in conſequence of his threats, begun to lay waſte Ireland; but as he returned with the ſpoil into Ulſter, through the narrow paſs of Cabhra (*Caoilghlen-Ghabhra*) he was met by Cairbar, and a battle enſued, in which both the heroes fell by mutual wounds. The bard gives a very curious liſt of the followers of Oſcar, as they

ſhouts aroſe, like crowded ſtreams; Moi-lena ecchoed wide.

Fingal heard the ſound; and took his father's ſpear. His ſteps are before us on the heath. He ſpoke the words of woe. I hear the noiſe of war. Young Oſcar is alone. Riſe, ſons of Morven; join the hero's ſword.

Oſſian ruſhed along the heath. Fillan bounded over Moi-lena. Fingal ſtrode in his ſtrength, and the light of his ſhield is terrible. The ſons of Erin ſaw it far diſtant; they trembled in their ſouls. They knew that the wrath of the king aroſe: and they foreſaw their death. We firſt arrived; we fought; and Erin's chiefs withſtood our rage. But when the king came, in the ſound of his courſe, what heart of ſteel could ſtand! Erin fled over Moi-lena. Death purſued their flight.

We

they marched to battle. They appear to have been five hundred in number, commanded, as the poet expreſſes it, by *five heroes of the blood of kings*. This poem mentions Fingal, as arriving from Scotland, before Oſcar died of his wounds.

We ſaw Oſcar on his ſhield. We ſaw his blood around. Silence darkened every face. Each turned his back, and wept. The king ſtrove to hide his tears. His grey beard whiſtled in the wind. He bent his head above his ſon. His words were mixed with ſighs.

And art thou fallen, Oſcar, in the midſt of thy courſe? the heart of the aged beats over thee! He ſees thy coming wars. The wars which ought to come he ſees, but they are cut off from thy fame. When ſhall joy dwell at Selma? When ſhall grief depart from Morven? My ſons fall by degrees: Fingal ſhall be the laſt of his race. The fame which I have received ſhall paſs away: my age will be without friends. I ſhall ſit a grey cloud in my hall: nor ſhall I hear the return of a ſon, in the midſt of his ſounding arms. Weep, ye heroes of Morven! never more ſhall Oſcar riſe!

And they did weep, o Fingal; dear was the hero to their ſouls. He went out to battle, and the foes vaniſhed; he returned, in peace, amidſt their joy. No father mourned his ſon ſlain in youth; no brother his brother of love.

They

They fell, without tears, for the chief of the people was low! Bran *) is howling at his feet: gloomy Luath is ſad, for he had often led them to the chace; to the bounding roe of the deſart.

When Oſcar ſaw his friends around, his breaſt aroſe with ſighs. —— The groans, he ſaid, of aged chiefs; the howling of my dogs; the ſudden burſt of ſongs of grief, have melted Oſcar's ſoul. My ſoul, that never melted before; it was like the ſteel of my ſword. —— Oſſian, carry me to my hills! Raiſe the ſtones of my renown. Place the horn of the deer, and my ſword, within my narrow dwelling. — The torrent hereafter may raiſe the earth: the hunter may find the ſteel, and ſay: "This has been Oſcar's ſword."

And falleſt thou, ſon of my fame! And ſhall I never ſee thee, Oſcar! When others hear of their ſons, I ſhall not hear of thee. The moſs is on thy four grey ſtones; the mournful

*) Bran was one of Fingal's dogs. —— He was ſo remarkable for his fleetneſs, that the poet, in a piece which is not juſt now in the translator's hands, has given him the ſame properties with Virgil's Camilla. Bran ſignifies *a mountain-ſtream.*

ful wind is there. The battle ſhall be fought without him: he ſhall not purſue the dark-brown hinds. When the warrior returns from battles, and tells of other lands: I have ſeen a tomb, he will ſay, by the roaring ſtream, the dark dwelling of a chief. He fell by car-borne Oſcar, the firſt of mortal men. —— I, perhaps, ſhall hear his voice; and a beam of joy will riſe in my ſoul.

The night would have deſcended in ſorrow, and morning returned in the ſhadow of grief; our chiefs would have ſtood like cold dropping rocks on Moi-lena, and have forgot the war: did not the king diſperſe his grief, and raiſe his mighty voice. The chiefs, as new-wakened from dreams, lift up their heads around.

How long on Moi-lena ſhall we weep; or pour our tears in Ullin? The mighty will not return. Oſcar ſhall not riſe in his ſtrength. The valiant muſt fall one day, and be no more known on his hills. —— Where are our fathers, o warriors! the chiefs of the times of old? They have ſet like ſtars that have ſhone: we only hear the ſound of their praiſe. But they were renowned in their day, the terror of other times. Thus ſhall we paſs, o warriors, in the day

day of our fall. Then let us be renowned, when we may; and leave our fame behind us, like the laſt beams of the ſun, when he hides his red head in the weſt.

Ullin, my aged bard! take the ſhip of the king. Carry Oſcar to Selma of harps. Let the daughters of Morven weep. We ſhall fight in Erin for the race of fallen Cormac. The days of my years begin to fail: I feel the weakneſs of my arm. My fathers bend from their clouds, to receive their grey-hair'd ſon. But, before I go hence, one beam of fame ſhall riſe: ſo ſhall my days end, as my years begun, in fame: my life ſhall be one ſtream of light to bards of other times.

Ullin raiſ'd his white ſails: the wind of the ſouth came forth. He bounded on the waves towards Selma. — *) I remained in my grief, but my words were not heard. —— The feaſt is ſpread on Moi-lena: an hundred heroes reared the tomb of Cairbar; but no ſong is raiſed over the chief: for his ſoul had been dark and bloody. The bards remembered the fall of Cormac! what could they ſay in Cairbar's praiſe?

The

*) The poet ſpeaks in his own perſon.

The night came rolling down. The light of an hundred oaks aroſe. Fingal ſat beneath a tree. Old Althan *) ſtood in the midſt. He told the tale of fallen Cormac. Althan the ſon of Conachar, the friend of car-borne Cuchullin: he dwelt with Cormac in windy Temora, when Semo's ſon fought with generous Torlath. —— The tale of Althan was mournful, and the tear was in his eye.

) The ſetting ſun was yellow on Dora *). Grey evening began to deſcend. Temora's woods ſhook with the blaſt of the unconſtant wind. A cloud, at length, gathered in the weſt, and a red ſtar looked from behind its edge. —— I ſtood in the wood alone, and ſaw

*) Althan, the ſon of Conachar, was the chief bard of Arth king of Ireland. After the death of Arth, Althan attended his ſon Cormac, and was preſent at his death. —— He had made his eſcape from Cairbar, by the means of Cathmor, and coming to Fingal, related, as here, the death of his maſter Cormac.

**) Althan ſpeaks.

***) Doira, *the woody ſide of a mountain;* it is here a hill in the neighbourhood of Temora.

ſaw a ghoſt on the darkening air. His ſtride extended from hill to hill: his ſhield was dim on his ſide. It was the ſon of Semo: I knew the warrior's face. But he paſſed away in his blaſt; and all was dark around. —— My ſoul was ſad. I went to the hall of ſhells. A thouſand lights aroſe: the hundred bards had ſtrung the harp. Cormac ſtood in the midſt, like the morning-ſtar, when it rejoices on the eaſtern hill, and its young beams are bathed in ſhowers. —— The ſword of Artho *) was in the hand of the king; and he looked with joy on its poliſhed ſtuds: thrice he ſtrove to draw it, and thrice he failed: his yellow locks are ſpread on his ſhoulders; his cheeks of youth are red. — I mourned over the beam of youth, for he was ſoon to ſet.

Althan! he ſaid, with a ſmile, haſt thou beheld my father? Heavy is the ſword of the king, ſurely his arm was ſtrong. O that I were like him in battle, when the rage of his wrath aroſe! then would I have met, like Cuchullin, the car-borne ſon of Cantéla! But years may come on, o Althan! and my arm be ſtrong. — Haſt

*) Arth or Artho, the father of Cormac king of Ireland.

Haſt thou heard of Semo's ſon, the chief of high Temora? He might have returned with his fame; for he promiſed to return to-night. My bards wait him with ſongs; my feaſt is ſpread in Temora.

I heard the king in ſilence. My tears began to flow. I hid them with my aged locks; but he perceived my grief.

Son of Conachar! he ſaid, is the king of Tura *) low? Why burſts thy ſigh in ſecret? And why deſcends the tear? —— Comes the car-borne Torlath? Or the ſound of the red-haired Cairbar? — They come! — for I behold thy grief. Moſſy Tura's king is low! —— Shall I not ruſh to battle? —— But I cannot lift the ſpear! — O had mine arm the ſtrength of Cuchullin, ſoon would Cairbar fly; the fame of my fathers would be renewed; and the deeds of other times!

He took his bow. The tears flow down, from both his ſparkling eyes. —— Grief ſaddens round: the bards bend forward, from their hundred

*) Cuchullin is called the king of Tura, from a caſtle of that name on the coaſt of Ulſter, where he dwelt, before he undertook the management of the affairs of Ireland, in the minority of Cormac.

hundred harps. The lone blaſt touched their trembling ſtrings. The ſound *) is ſad and low.

A voice is heard at a diſtance, as of one in grief: it was Carril of other times, who came from dark Slimora **). —— He told of the death of Cuchullin, and of his mighty deeds. The people were ſcattered round his tomb: their arms lay on the ground. They had forgot the war, for he, their fire, was ſeen no more.

But who, ſaid the ſoft-voiced Carril, come like the bounding roes? their ſtature is like the young trees of the plain, growing in a ſhower; —— Soft and ruddy are their cheeks; but fearleſs ſouls look forth from their eyes.

*) The prophetic ſound, mentioned in other poems, which the harps of the bards emitted before the death of a perſon worthy and renowned. It is here an omen of the death of Cormac, which, ſoon after, followed.

**) Slimora, a hill in Connaught, near which Cuchullin was killed.

eyes. —— Who but the ſons of Usnoth *), the car-borne chiefs of Etha? The people riſe on every ſide, like the ſtrength of an half-exſtinguiſhed fire, when the winds come, ſudden, from the deſart, on their ruſtling wings. —— The ſound of Caithbat's **) ſhield was heard. The

*) Usnoth, chief of Etha, a diſtrict on the weſtern coaſt of Scotland, had three ſons, Nathos, Althos and Ardan, by Sliſſama the ſiſter of Cuchullin. The three brothers, when very young, were ſent over to Ireland by their father, to learn the uſe of arms under their uncle, whoſe military fame was very great in that kingdom. They had juſt arrived in Ulſter, when the news of Cuchullin's death arrived. Nathos, the eldeſt of the three brothers, took the command of Cuchullin's army, and made head againſt Cairbar the chief of Atha. Cairbar having, at laſt, murdered young king Cormac, at Temora, the army of Nathos ſhifted ſides, and the brothers were obliged to return into Ulſter, in order to paſs over into Scotland. The ſequel of their mournful ſtory is related, at large, in the poem of Darthula.

**) Caithbat was grandfather to Cuchullin; and his ſhield was made uſe of, to alarm his poſterity to the battles of the family.

The heroes ſaw Cuchullin *) in Nathos. So rolled his ſparkling eyes: his ſteps were ſuch on heath. —— Battles are fought at Lego: the ſword of Nathos prevails. Soon ſhalt thou behold him in thy halls, king of Temora of Groves!

And ſoon may I behold the chiefs! replyed the blue-eyed king. But my ſoul is ſad for Cuchullin; his voice was pleaſant in mine ear. —— Often have we moved, on Dora, to the chace of the dark-brown hinds: his bow was unerring on the mountains. —— He ſpoke of mighty men. He told of the deeds of my fathers; and I felt my joy. —— But ſit thou at the feaſt, o bard! I have often heard thy voice. Sing in the praiſe of Cuchullin; and of that mighty ſtranger **).

Day roſe on woody Temora, with all the beams of the eaſt. Trathin came to the hall, the ſon of old Gelláma ***). —— I behold, he

*) That is, they ſaw a manifeſt likeneſs between the perſon of Nathos and Cuchullin.

**) Nathos the ſon of Usnoth.

***) Geal-lamha, *white-handed.*

he ſaid, a dark cloud in the deſart, king of Innisfail! a cloud it ſeemed at firſt, but now a croud of men. One ſtrides before them in his ſtrength; his red hair flies in the wind. His ſhield glitters to the beam of the eaſt. His ſpear is in his hand.

Call him to the feaſt of Temora, replied the king of Erin. My hall is the houſe of ſtrangers, ſon of the generous Gellâma! —— Perhaps it is the chief of Etha, coming in the ſound of his renown. —— Hail, mighty *) ſtranger, art thou of the friends of Cormac? — But Carril, he is dark, and unlovely; and he draws his ſword. Is that the ſon of Usnoth, bard of the times of old?

It is not the ſon of Usnoth, ſaid Carril, but the chief of Atha. —— Why comeſt thou in thy arms to Temora, Cairbar of the gloomy brow? Let not thy ſword riſe againſt Cormac! Whither doſt thou turn thy ſpeed?

He paſſed on in his darkneſs, and ſeized the hand of the king. Cormac foreſaw his death, and

*) From this expreſſion, we underſtand, that Cairbar had entered the palace of Temora, in the midſt of Cormac's ſpeech.

and the rage of his eyes aroſe. —— Retire, thou gloomy chief of Atha: Nathos comes with battle. —— Thou art bold in Cormac's hall, for his arm is weak. —— The ſword entered the ſide of the king: he fell in the halls of his fathers. His fair hair is in the duſt. His blood is ſmoking round.

And art thou fallen in thy halls *), o ſon of noble Artho? The ſhield of Cuchullin was not near. Nor the ſpear of thy father. Mournful are the mountains of Erin, for the chief of the people is low! —— Bleſt be thy ſoul, o Cormac! thou art darkened in thy youth.

My words came to the ears of Cairbar, and he cloſed us **) in the midſt of darkneſs. He feared to ſtretch his ſword to the bards ***), though his ſoul was dark. Long had we pined alone;

*) Althan ſpeaks.

**) That is, himſelf and Carril, as it afterwards appears.

***) The perſons of the bards were ſo ſacred, that even he, who had juſt murdered his ſovereign, feared to kill them.

alone: at length, the noble Cathmor *) came. —— He heard our voice from the cave; he turned the eye of his wrath on Cairbar.

Chief of Atha! he ſaid, how long wilt thou pain my ſoul? Thy heart is like the rock of the deſart; and thy thoughts are dark. —— But thou art the brother of Cathmor, and he will fight thy battles. —— But Cathmor's ſoul is not like thine, thou feeble hand of war! The light of my boſom is ſtained with thy deeds: the bards will not ſing of my renown. They may ſay, "Cathmor was brave, but he fought for gloomy Cairbar." They will paſs over my tomb in ſilence: my fame ſhall not be heard. —— Cairbar! looſe the bards: they are the ſons of other times. Their voice ſhall be heard in other years; after the kings of Temora have failed. ——

We

*) Cathmor appears the ſame diſintereſted hero upon every occaſion. His humanity and generoſity were unparalleled: in ſhort, he had no fault, but too much attachment to ſo bad a brother as Cairbar. His family-connection with Cairbar prevails, as he expreſſes it, over every other conſideration, and makes him engage in a war, of which he did not approve.

We came forth at the words of the chief. We ſaw him in his ſtrength. He was like thy youth, o Fingal, when thou firſt didſt lift the ſpear. —— His face was like the plain of the ſun, when it is bright: no darkneſs travelled over his brow. But he came with his thouſands to Ullin, to aid the red-haired Cairbar: and now he comes, to revenge his death, o king of woody Morven. ——

And let him come, replied the king; I love a foe like Cathmor. His ſoul is great; his arm is ſtrong; his battles are full of fame. — But the little ſoul is a vapour that hovers round the marſhy lake: it never riſes on the green hill, leſt the winds ſhould meet it there: its dwelling is in the cave, it ſends forth the dart of death.

Our young heroes, o warriors, are like the renown of our fathers. —— They fight in youth; they fall: their names are in the ſong. Fingal is amidſt his darkening years. He muſt not fall, as an aged oak, acroſs a ſecret ſtream. Near it are the ſteps of the hunter, as it lies beneath the wind. "How has that tree fallen?" He, whiſtling, ſtrides along.

Raiſe

Raiſe the ſong of joy, ye bards of Morven! that our ſoul may forget the paſt. —— The red ſtars look on us from the clouds, and ſilently deſcend. Soon ſhall the grey beam of the morning riſe, and ſhew us the foes of Cormac. —— Fillan! take the ſpear of the king; go to Mora's dark-brown ſide. Let thine eyes travel over the heath, like flames of fire. Obſerve the foes of Fingal, and the courſe of generous Cathmor. I hear a diſtant ſound, like the falling of rocks in the deſart. —— But ſtrike thou thy ſhield, at times, that they may not come through night, and the fame of Morven ceaſe. —— I begin to be alone, my ſon, and I dread the fall of my renown.

The voice of the bards aroſe. The king leaned on the ſhield of Trenmor. —— Sleep deſcended on his eyes; his future battles roſe in his dreams. The hoſt are ſleeping around. Dark-haired Fillan obſerved the foe. His ſteps are on a diſtant hill: we hear, at times, his clanging ſhield.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK SECOND.

TIMOLA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

IN SECOND.

ARGUMENT TO BOOK II.

This book opens, we may ſuppoſe, about midnight, with a ſoliloquy of Oſſian, who had retired, from the reſt of the army, to mourn for his ſon Oſcar. Upon hearing the noiſe of Cathmor's army approaching, he went to find out his brother Fillan, who kept the watch, on the hill of Mora, in the front of Fingal's army. In the converſation of the brothers, the epiſode of Conar, the ſon of Trenmor, who was the firſt king of Ireland, is introduced; which lays open the origin of the conteſts between the Caël and Firbolg, the two nations who firſt poſſeſſed themſelves of that Iſland. Oſſian kindles a fire on Mora; upon which Cathmor deſiſted from the deſign he had formed of ſurpriſing the army of the Caledonians. He calls a council of his chiefs; reprimands Foldath for adviſing a night-attack, as the Iriſh army were ſo much ſuperior in number to the enemy. The bard Fonar introduces the ſtory of Crothar, the anceſtor of the king, which throws further light on the hiſtory of Ireland, and the original pretenſions of the family of Atha, to the throne of that kingdom. The Iriſh chiefs lie down to reſt, and Cathmor himſelf undertakes the watch. In his circuit, round the army, he is met by Oſſian.

ARGUMENT TO BOOK II.

an. The interview of the two heroes is described. Cathmor obtains a promise from Ossian, to order a funeral elegy to be sung over the grave of Cairbar; it being the opinion of the times, that the souls of the dead could not be happy, till their elegies were sung by a bard. Morning comes. Cathmor and Ossian part; and the latter, casually meeting with Carril the son of Kinsena, sends that bard, with a funeral song, to the tomb of Cairbar.

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TEMO-

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK SECOND.

*) Father of heroes, Trenmor! dweller of eddying winds! where the dark-red courſe of thunder marks the troubled clouds! Open thou thy

*) Addreſſes to the ſpirits of deceaſed warriors are common, in the compoſitions of Oſſian. He, however, expreſſes them in ſuch language, as prevents all ſuſpicion of his paying divine honours to the dead, as was uſual among other nations. —— From the ſequel of this apoſtrophe, it appears, that Oſſian had retired from the reſt of the army, to mourn, in ſecret, over the death of his ſon Oſcar. This indirect method of narration has much of the nature of the Drama, and is more forcible than a regular hiſtorical

thy ſtormy halls, and let the bards of old be near: let them draw near, with their ſongs and their half-viewleſs harps. No dweller of miſty valley comes; no hunter unknown at his ſtreams; but

chain of circumſtances. The abrupt manner of Oſſian may often render him obſcure to inattentive readers. Thoſe who retain his poems on memory, ſeem to be ſenſible of this; and uſually give the hiſtory of the pieces minutely, before they begin to repeat the poetry.

Tho' this book has little action, it is not the leaſt important part of Temora. The poet, in ſeveral epiſodes, runs up the cauſe of the war to the very ſource. The firſt population of Ireland, the wars between the two nations who originally poſſeſſed that Island, its firſt race of kings, and the revolutions of its government, are important facts, and are delivered by the poet, with ſo little mixture of the fabulous, that one cannot help preferring his accounts to the improbable fictions of the Scotch and Iriſh hiſtorians. The Mileſian fables of thoſe gentlemen bear about them the marks of a late invention. To trace their legends to their ſource would be no difficult taſk; but a diſquiſition of this ſort would extend this note too far.

but the car-borne Oſcar from the folds of war. Sudden is thy change, my ſon, from what thou wert on dark Moilena! The blaſt folds thee in its ſkirt, and ruſtles along the ſky.

Doſt thou not behold thy father, at the ſtream of night? The chiefs of Morven ſleep far-diſtant. They have loſt no ſon. — But ye have loſt a hero, chiefs of ſtreamy Morven! Who could equal his ſtrength, when battle rolled againſt his ſide, like the darkneſs of crowded waters? —— Why this cloud on Oſſian's ſoul? It ought to burn in danger. Erin is near with her hoſt. The king of Morven is alone. —— Alone thou ſhalt not be, my father, while I can lift the ſpear.

I roſe, in my rattling arms. I liſtened to the wind of night. The ſhield of Fillan *) is not

*) We underſtand, from the preceding book, that Cathmor was near with an army. When Cairbar was killed, the tribes who attended him, fell back to Cathmor; who, as it afterwards appears, had taken a reſolution to ſurprize Fingal by night. Fillan was dispatched to the hill of Mota, which was in the front of the Caledonians,

not heard. I ſhook for the ſon of Fingal. Why ſhould the foe come, by night; and the dark haired warrior fail? —— Diſtant, ſullen murmurs riſe: like the noiſe of the lake of Lego, when its waters ſhrink, in the days of froſt, and all its burſting ice reſounds. The people of Lara look to heaven, and foreſee the ſtorm. —— My ſteps are forward on the heath: the ſpear of Oſcar in my hand. Red ſtars looked from high. I gleamed, along the night. —— I ſaw Fillan ſilent before me, bending forward from Mora's rock. He heard the ſhout of

to obſerve the motions of Cathmor. In this ſituation were affairs, when Oſſian, upon hearing the noiſe of the approaching enemy, went to find out his brother. Their converſation naturally introduces the epiſode, concerning Conar the ſon of Trenmor the firſt Iriſh monarch, which is ſo neceſſary to the underſtanding of the foundation of the rebellion and uſurpation of Cairbar and Cathmor. —— Fillan was the youngeſt of the ſons of Fingal, then living. He and Bosmina, mentioned in the *battle of Lora*, were the only children of the king, by Clatho the daughter of Cathulla king of Inis-tore, whom he had taken to wife, after the death of Ros-crana, the daughter of Cormac Mac-Conar king of Ireland.

of the foe; the joy of his ſoul aroſe. He heard my ſounding tread, and turned his lifted ſpear.

Comeſt thou, ſon of night, in peace? Or doſt thou meet my wrath? The foes of Fingal are mine. Speak, or fear my ſteel. —— I ſtand, not in vain, the ſhield of Morven's race.

Never mayſt thou ſtand in vain, ſon of blue-eyed Clatho. Fingal begins to be alone; darkneſs gathers on the laſt of his days. Yet he has two *) ſons, who ought to ſhine in war. Who

*) That is, two ſons in Ireland. Fergus, the ſecond ſon of Fingal, was, at that time, on an expedition, which is mentioned in one of the leſſer poems of Oſſian. He, according to ſome traditions, was the anceſtor of Fergus, the ſon of Erc or Arcath, commonly called *Fergus the ſecond* in the Scotch hiſtories. The beginning of the reign of Fergus, over the Scots, is placed, by the moſt approved annals of Scotland, in the fourth year of the fifth age: a full century after the death of Oſſian. The genealogy of his family is recorded thus by the highland Seanachies; *Fergus Mac-Arcath, Mac-Chongael, Mac-Fergus, Mac-Fiongael na buai*: i. e. Fergus the ſon

Who ought to be two beams of light, near the ſteps of his departure.

Son of Fingal, replied the youth, it is not long ſince I raiſed the ſpear. Few are the marks of my ſword in battle, but my ſoul is fire. The chiefs of Bolga *) crowd around the ſhield of generous Cathmor. Their gathering is on that heath. Shall my ſteps approach their hoſt? I yielded to Oſcar alone, in the ſtrife of the race, on Cona.

Fillan, thou ſhalt not approach their hoſt; nor fall before thy fame is known. My name is heard in ſong: when needful I advance. — From the ſkirts of night I ſhall view their gleam-

of Arcath, the ſon of Congal, the ſon of Fergus, the ſon of Fingal *the victorious*. This ſubject is treated more at large, in the diſſertation prefixed to the poem.

*) The ſouthern parts of Ireland went, for ſome time, under the name of Bolga, from the Firbolg or Belgæ of Britain, who ſettled a colony there. *Bolg* ſignifies *a quiver*, from which proceeds *Fir-bolg*, i. e. *bow-men*, ſo called from their uſing bows, more than any of the neighbouring nations.

gleaming tribes. —— Why, Fillan, didſt thou ſpeak of Oſcar, to call forth my ſigh? I muſt forget *) the warrior, till the ſtorm is rolled away. Sadneſs ought not to dwell in danger, nor the tear in the eye of war. Our fathers forgot their fallen ſons, till the noiſe of arms was paſt. Then ſorrow returned to the tomb, and the ſong of bards aroſe.

Conar

*) It is remarkable, that, after this paſſage, Oſcar is not mentioned in all Temora. The ſituations of the characters who act in the poem, are ſo intereſting, that others, foreign to the ſubject, could not be introduced with any luſtre. Tho' the epiſode, which follows, may ſeem to flow naturally enough from the converſation of the brothers: yet I have ſhewn, in a preceding note, and, more at large, in the diſſertation prefixed to this collection, that the poet had a farther deſign in view. It is highly probable, tho' the Iriſh annaliſts do not agree with Oſſian in other particulars, that the Conar here mentioned is the ſame with their *Conar-mór*, i. e. *Conar the great*, whom they place in the firſt century.

Conar *) was the brother of Trathal, firſt of mortal men. His battles were on every coaſt. A thouſand ſtreams rolled down the blood of his foes. His fame filled green Erin, like a pleaſant gale. The nations gathered in Ullin, and they bleſſed the king; the king of the

*) Conar, the firſt king of Ireland, was the ſon of Trenmor, the great-grand-father of Fingal. It was on account of this family-connection, that Fingal was engaged in ſo many wars in the cauſe of the race of Conar. Tho' few of the actions of Trenmor are mentioned in Oſſian's poems, yet, from the honourable appellations beſtowed on him, we may conclude, that he was, in the days of the poet, the moſt renowned name of antiquity. The moſt probable opinion concerning him is, that he was the firſt, who united the tribes of the Caledonians, and commanded them, in chief, againſt the incurſions of the Romans. The genealogiſts of the North have traced his family far back, and given a liſt of his anceſtors to *Cuanmôr nan lan*, or Conmor of the ſwords, who, according to them, was the firſt who croſſed the *great ſea*, to Caledonia, from which circumſtance his name proceeded, which ſignifies *Great ocean*. Genealogies of ſo ancient a date, however, are little to be depended upon.

the race of their fathers, from the land of hinds.

The chiefs *) of the ſouth were gathered, in the darkneſs of their pride. In the horrid cave of Moma, they mixed their ſecret words. Thither often, they ſaid, the ſpirits of their fathers came: ſhewing their pale forms from the chinky rocks, and reminding them of the honour of Bolga. —— Why ſhould Conar reign, the ſon of ſtreamy Morven?

They came forth, like the ſtreams of the deſart, with the roar of their hundred tribes. Conar was a rock before them: broken they rolled on every ſide. But often they returned, and the ſons of Ullin fell. The king ſtood, among the tombs of his warriors, and darkly bent

*) The chiefs of the Fir-bolg, who poſſeſſed themſelves of the ſouth of Ireland, prior, perhaps, to the ſettlement of the *Caël* of Caledonia, and the Hebrides, in Ulſter. From the ſequel, it appears, that the Fir-bolg were, by much, the moſt powerful nation; and it is probable, that the Caël muſt have ſubmitted to them, had they not received ſuccours from their mother-country, under the command of Conar.

bent his mournful face. His ſoul was rolled into itſelf; he marked the place, where he was to fall; when Trathal came, in his ſtrength, the chief of cloudy Morven. —— Nor did he come alone: Colgar *) was at his ſide; Colgar the ſon of the king and of white-boſomed Solincorma.

As Trenmor, cloathed with meteors, deſcends from the halls of thunder, pouring the dark ſtorm before him over the troubled ſea: ſo Colgar deſcended to battle, and waſted the ecchoing field. His father rejoiced over the hero: but an arrow came. His tomb was raiſed,

*) Colg-er, *fiercely-looking warrior.* Sulin-corma, *blue eyes.* Colgar was the eldeſt of the ſons of Trathal: Comhal, who was the father of Fingal, was very young, when the preſent expedition to Ireland happened. It is remarkable, that, of all his anceſtors, the poet makes the leaſt mention of Comhal; which, probably, proceeded from the unfortunate life and untimely death of that hero. From ſome paſſages, concerning him, we learn, indeed, that he was brave, but he wanted conduct, and, as Oſſian expreſſes it, *his ſoul was dark.* This impartiality, with reſpect to a character ſo near him, reflects honour on the poet.

ed, without a tear. The king was to revenge his ſon. —— He lightened forward in battle, till Bolga yielded at her ſtreams.

When peace returned to the land, and his blue waves bore the king to Morven: then he remembered his ſon, and poured the ſilent tear. Thrice did the bards, at the cave of Furmóno, call the ſoul of Colgar. They called him to the hills of his land; he heard them in his miſt. Trathal placed his ſword in the cave, that the ſpirit of his ſon might rejoice.

*) Colgar, ſon of Trathal, ſaid Fillan, thou wert renowned in youth! But the king has not marked my ſword, bright-ſtreaming on the field. I go forth with the crowd: I return, without my fame. —— But the foe approaches, Oſſian. I hear their murmur on the heath.

*) The poet begins here to mark ſtrongly the character of Fillan, who is to make ſo great a figure in the ſequel of the poem. He has the impatience, the ambition and fire, which are peculiar to a young hero. Kindled with the fame of Colgar, he forgets his untimely fall. —— From Fillan's expreſſions in this paſſage, it would ſeem, that he was neglected by Fingal, on account of his youth.

heath. The ſound of their ſteps is like thunder, in the boſom of the ground, when the rocking hills ſhake their groves, and not a blaſt pours from the darkened ſky.

Sudden I turned on my ſpear, and raiſed the flame of an oak on high. I ſpread it large, on Mora's wind. Cathmor ſtopt in his courſe. —— Gleaming he ſtood, like a rock, on whoſe ſides are the wandering of blaſts; which ſeize its ecchoing ſtreams\ and clothe them over with ice. So ſtood the friend *) of ſtrangers. The winds lift his heavy locks. Thou art the talleſt of the race of Erin, king of ſtreamy Atha!

Firſt of bards, ſaid Cathmor, Fonar **), call the chiefs of Erin. Call red-hair'd Cormar,

*) Cathmor is diſtinguiſhed, by this honourable title, on account of his generoſity to ſtrangers, which was ſo great as to be remarkable even in thoſe days of hoſpitality.

**) *Fónar, the man of ſong.* Before the introduction of Chriſtianity a name was not impoſed upon any perſon, till he had diſtinguiſhed himſelf by ſome remarkable action, from which his name

mar, dark-browed Malthos, the ſide-long-looking gloom of Marónan. Let the pride of Foldath appear: the red-rolling eye of Turlótho. Nor let Hidalla be forgot; his voice, in danger, is like the ſound of a ſhower, when it falls in the blaſted vale, near Atha's failing ſtream.

They came, in their clanging arms. They bent forward to his voice, as if a ſpirit of their fathers ſpoke from a cloud of night. — Dreadful ſhone they to the light; like the fall of the ſtream of Brumo *), when the meteor lights it, before the nightly ſtranger. Shuddering, he ſtops in his journey, and looks up for the beam of the morn.

Why

name ſhould be derived. Hence it is that the names in the poems of Oſſian, ſuit ſo well with the characters of the perſons who bear them.

*) Brumo was a place of worſhip (Fing. b. 6.) in Craca, which is ſuppoſed to be one of the iſles of Shetland. It was thought, that the ſpirits of the deceaſed haunted it, by night, which adds more terror to the deſcription introduced here. *The horrid circle of Brumo, where often, they ſaid, the ghoſts of the dead howled round the ſtone of fear.* Fing.

*) Why delights Foldath, ſaid the king, to pour the blood of foes, by night? Fails his arm in battle, in the beams of day? Few are the foes before us, why ſhould we clothe us in miſt? The valiant delight to ſhine, in the battles of their land. ——

Thy counſel was in vain, chief of Moma; the eyes of Morven do not ſleep. They are watchful, as eagles, on their moſſy rocks. —— Let each collect, beneath his cloud, the ſtrength of his roaring tribe. To-morrow I move, in light, to meet the foes of Bolga! —— Mighty **) was he, that is low, the race of Borbar-Duthul.

Not

*) From this paſſage, it appears, that it was Foldath who had adviſed the night-attack. The gloomy character of Foldath is properly contraſted to the generous, the open Cathmor. Oſſian is peculiarly happy in oppoſing different characters, and, by that means, in heightening the features of both. Foldath appears to have been the favourite of Cairbar, and it cannot be denied but he was a proper enough miniſter to ſuch a prince. He was cruel and impetuous, but ſeems to have had great martial merit.

**) By this exclamation Cathmor intimates, that he intends to revenge the death of his brother Cairbar.

Not unmarked, ſaid Foldath, were my ſteps before thy race. In light, I met the foes of Cairbar; the warrior praiſed my deeds. —— But his ſtone was raiſed without a tear. No bard ſung *) over Erin's king; and ſhall his foes rejoice along their moſſy hills? —— No: they muſt not rejoice: he was the friend of Foldath. Our words were mixed, in ſecret, in Moma's ſilent cave; whilſt thou, a boy in the field, purſuedſt the thiſtle's beard. —— With Moma's ſons I ſhall ruſh abroad, and find the foe, on his duſky hills. Fingal ſhall lie without his ſong, the grey-haired king of Selma.

Doſt thou think, thou feeble man, replied the chief of Atha; doſt thou think, that he can fall, without his fame, in Erin? Could the bards be ſilent, at the tomb of the mighty Fingal? The ſong would burſt in ſecret; and the ſpirit of the king rejoice. —— It is, when thou ſhalt fall, that the bard ſhall forget the ſong. Thou art dark, chief of Moma, tho' thine arm is a tempeſt in war. —— Do I for-

get

*) To have no funeral elegy ſung over his tomb, was, in thoſe days, reckoned the greateſt misfortune that could befall a man; as his ſoul could not otherwiſe be admitted to the *airy hall of his fathers.*

get the king of Erin, in his narrow houſe? My ſoul is not loſt to Cairbar, the brother of my love. I marked the bright beams of joy, which travelled over his cloudy mind, when I returned, with fame, to Atha of the ſtreams.

Tall they removed, beneath the words of the king; each to his own dark tribe; where, humming, they rolled on the heath, faint-glittering to the ſtars: like waves, in the rocky bay, before the nightly wind. —— Beneath an oak, lay the chief of Atha: his ſhield, a duſky round, hung high. Near him, againſt a rock, leaned the ſtranger *) of Inis-huna: that beam of light, with wandering locks, from Lumon of the roes. —— At diſtance roſe the voice of Fonar, with the deeds of the days of old. The ſong fails, at times, in Lubar's growing roar.

Cro-

*) By *the ſtranger of Inis-huna*, is meant Sulmalla, the daughter of Conmor king of Inis-huna, the ancient name of that part of South-Britain, which is next to the Iriſh coaſt. —— She had followed Cathmor in diſguiſe. Her ſtory is related at large in the fourth book.

*) Crothar, begun the bard, firſt dwelt at Atha's moſſy ſtream. A thouſand **) oaks, from the mountains, formed his ecchoing hall. The

*) Crothar was the anceſtor of Cathmor, and the firſt of his family, who had ſettled in Atha. It was in his time, that the firſt wars were kindled between the Fir-bolg and Caël. The propriety of the epiſode is evident; as the conteſt, which originally roſe between Crothar and Conar, ſubſiſted afterward between their poſterity, and was the foundation of the ſtory of the poem.

**) From this circumſtance we may learn, that the art of building with ſtone was not known in Ireland ſo early as the days of Crothar. When the colony were long ſettled in the country, the arts of civil life began to increaſe among them: for we find mention made of the *towers of Atha* in the time of Cathmor, which could not well be applied to wooden buildings. In Caledonia they begun very early to build with ſtone. None of the houſes of Fingal, excepting Ti-foirmal, were of wood. Ti-foirmal was the great hall, where the bards met to repeat their compoſitions annually, before they ſubmitted them to the judgment of the king in Selma. By ſome accident or other, this wooden houſe happened

The gathering of the people was there, around the feaſt of the blue-eyed king. —— But who, among his chiefs, was like the ſtately Crothar? Warriors kindled in his preſence. The young ſigh of the virgins roſe. In Alnecma *) was the warrior honoured, the firſt of the race of Bolga.

He purſued the chace in Ullin: on the moſs-covered top of Drumárdo. From the wood looked the daughter of Cathmin, the blue-rolling eye of Con-láma. Her ſigh roſe in ſecret. She bent her head, midſt her wandering locks. The moon

to be burnt, and an ancient bard, in the character of Oſſian, has left us a curious catalogue of the furniture which it contained. The poem is not juſt now in my hands, otherwiſe I would lay here a translation of it before the reader. It has little poetical merit, and evidently bears the marks of a period much later than that wherein Fingal lived.

*) Alnecma, or Alnecmacht, was the ancient name of Connaught. Ullin is ſtill the Iriſh name of the province of Ulſter. To avoid the multiplying of notes, I ſhall here give the ſignification of the names in this epiſode. Drumardo, *high-ridge.* Cathmin, *calm in battle.* Cón-lamha, *ſoft hand.* Turloch, *man of the quiver.* Cormul, *blue eye.*

moon looked in, at night, and ſaw the white toſſing of her arms: for ſhe thought of the mighty Crothar, in the ſeaſon of her dreams.

Three days feaſted Crothar with Cathmin. On the fourth they awaked the hinds. Conláma moved to the chace, with all her lovely ſteps. She met Crothar in the narrow path. The bow fell, at once, from her hand. She turned her face away, and half-hid it with her locks. —— The love of Crothar roſe. He brought the white-boſomed maid to Atha. —— Bards raiſed the ſong in her preſence; joy dwelt round the daughter of Ullin.

The pride of Turloch roſe, a youth who loved the white-handed Con-láma. He came, with battle, to Alnecma; to Atha of the roes. Cormul went forth to the ſtrife, the brother of car-borne Crothar. He went forth, but he fell, and the ſigh of his people roſe. —— Silent and tall, acroſs the ſtream, came the darkening ſtrength of Crothar: he rolled the foe from Alnecma, and returned, midſt the joy of Conláma.

Battle on battle comes. Blood is poured on blood. The tombs of the valiant riſe. Erin's clouds are hung round with ghoſts. The

chiefs of the ſouth gathered round the ecchoing ſhield of Crothar. He came, with death, to the paths of the foe. The virgins wept, by the ſtreams of Ullin. They looked to the miſt of the hill, no hunter deſcended from its folds. Silence darkened in the land: blaſts ſighed lonely on graſſy tombs.

Deſcending like the eagle of heaven, with all his ruſtling wings, when he forſakes the blaſt with joy, the ſon of Trenmor came; Conar, arm of death, from Morven of the groves. —— He poured his might along green Erin. Death dimly ſtrode behind his ſword. The ſons of Bolga fled from his courſe, as from a ſtream, that burſting from the ſtormy deſart, rolls the fields together, with all their ecchoing woods. —— Crothar *) met him in battle: but Al-

nec-

*) The delicacy of the bard, with regard to Crothar, is remarkable. As he was the anceſtor of Cathmor, to whom the epiſode is addreſſed, the bard ſoftens his defeat, by only mentioning that his *people fled*. —— Cathmor took the ſong of Fonar in an unfavourable light. The bards, being of the order of the Druids, who pretended to a foreknowledge of events, were ſuppoſed to have ſome ſupernatural preſcience of futurity. The king

necma's warriors fled. The king of Atha ſlowly retired, in the grief of his ſoul. He, afterwards, ſhone in the ſouth: but dim as the ſun of Autumn; when he viſits, in his robes of miſt, Lara of dark ſtreams. The withered graſs is covered with dew: the field, tho' bright, is ſad.

Why wakes the bard before me, ſaid Cathmor, the memory of thoſe who fled? Has ſome ghoſt, from his duſky cloud, bent forward to thine ear; to frighten Cathmor from the field with the tales of old? Dwellers of the folds of night, your voice is but a blaſt to me; which takes the grey thiſtle's head, and ſtrews its beard on ſtreams. Within my boſom is a voice; others hear it not. His ſoul forbids the king of Erin, to ſhrink back from war.

Abaſhed

king thought, that the choice of Fonar's ſong proceeded, from his foreſeeing the unfortunate iſſue of the war; and that his own fate was ſhadowed out, in that of his anceſtor Crothar. The attitude of the bard, after the reprimand of his patron, is picturesque and affecting. We admire the ſpeech of Cathmor, but lament the effect it has on the feeling ſoul of the good old poet.

Abaſhed the bard ſinks back in night: retired, he bends above a ſtream. His thoughts are on the days of Atha, when Cathmor heard his ſong with joy. His tears come rolling down: the winds are in his beard.

Erin ſleeps around. No ſleep comes down on Cathmor's eyes. Dark, in his ſoul, he ſaw the ſpirit of low-laid Cairbar. He ſaw him, without his ſong, rolled in a blaſt of night. — He roſe. His ſteps were round the hoſt. He ſtruck, at times, his ecchoing ſhield. The ſound reached Oſſian's ear, on Mora of the hinds.

Fillan, I ſaid, the foes advance. I hear the ſhield of war. Stand thou in the narrow path. Oſſian ſhall mark their courſe. If over my fall the hoſt ſhall pour; then be thy buckler heard. Awake the king on his heath, leſt his fame ſhould ceaſe.

I ſtrode in all my rattling arms; wide-bounding over a ſtream, that darkly-winded, in the field, before the king of Atha. Green Atha's king, with lifted ſpear, came forward on my courſe. —— Now would we have mixed in horrid fray, like two contending ghoſts, that bending forward, from two clouds, ſend

ſend forth the roaring winds; did not Oſſian behold, on high, the helmet of Erin's kings. The Eagle's wing ſpread above it, ruſtling in the breeze. A red ſtar looked thro' the plumes. I ſtopt the lifted ſpear.

The helmet of kings is before me! Who art thou, ſon of night? Shall Oſſian's ſpear be renowned, when thou art lowly-laid? —— At once he dropt the gleaming lance. Growing before me ſeemed the form. He ſtretched his hand in night; and ſpoke the words of kings.

Friend of the ſpirit of heroes, do I meet thee thus in ſhades? I have wiſhed for thy ſtately ſteps in Atha, in the days of feaſts. — Why ſhould my ſpear now ariſe? The ſun muſt behold us, Oſſian; when we bend gleaming, in the ſtrife. Future warriors ſhall mark the place: and, ſhuddering, think of other years. They ſhall mark it, like the haunt of ghoſts, pleaſant and dreadful to the ſoul.

And ſhall it be forgot, I ſaid, where we meet in peace? Is the remembrance of battles always pleaſant to the ſoul? Do not we behold, with joy, the place where our fathers feaſted? But our eyes are full of tears, on the field of their wars. —— This ſtone ſhall riſe, with all

its moſs, and ſpeak to other years: "Here Cathmor and Oſſian met! the warriors met in peace!" —— When thou, o ſtone, ſhalt fail: and Lubar's ſtream roll quite away: then ſhall the traveller come, and bend here, perhaps, in reſt. When the darkened moon is rolled over his head, our ſhadowy forms may come, and, mixing with his dreams, remind him of this place. But why turneſt thou ſo dark away, ſon of Borbar-duthul *)?

No forgot, ſon of Fingal, ſhall we aſcend theſe winds. Our deeds are ſtreams of light, before the eyes of bards. But darkneſs is rolled on Atha; the king is low, without his ſong; ſtill there was a beam towards Cathmor from his ſtormy ſoul; like the moon, in a cloud, amidſt the dark-red courſe of thunder.

Son

*) Borbar-duthul, *the ſurly warrior of the dark-brown eyes.* That his name ſuited well with his character, we may eaſily conceive, from the ſtory delivered concerning him, by Malthos, toward the end of the ſixth book. He was the brother of that Colculla, who is mentioned in the epiſode which begins the fourth book.

Son of Erin, I replied, my wrath dwells not in his houſe *). My hatred flies, on eagle-wing, from the foe that is low. —— He ſhall hear the ſong of bards; Cairbar ſhall rejoice on his wind.

Cathmor's ſwelling ſoul aroſe: he took the dagger from his ſide; and placed it gleaming in my hand. He placed it in my hand, with ſighs, and, ſilent, ſtrode away. —— Mine eyes followed his departure. He dimly gleamed, like the form of a ghoſt, which meets a traveller, by night, on the dark-ſkirted heath. His words are dark like ſongs of old: with morning ſtrides the unfiniſhed ſhade away.

**) Who comes from Lubar's vale? From the folds of the morning-miſt? The drops of heaven

*) The grave, often poetically called a houſe. This reply of Oſſian abounds with the moſt exalted ſentiments of a noble mind. Tho', of all men living, he was the moſt injured by Cairbar, yet he lays aſide his rage, as the *foe was low*. How different is this from the behaviour of the heroes of other ancient poems! — *Cynthius aurem vellit.*

**) The morning of the ſecond day, from the open-

heaven are on his head. His ſteps are in the paths of the ſad. It is Carril of other times. He comes from Tura's ſilent cave. I behold it dark in the rock, thro' the thin folds of miſt. There, perhaps, Cuchullin ſits, on the blaſt which

ing of the poem, comes on. —— After the death of Cuchullin, Carril, the ſon of Kinfena, his bard, retired to the cave of Tura, which was in the neighbourhood of Moi-lena, the ſcene of the poem of Temora. His caſual appearance here enables Oſſian to fulfil immediately the promiſe he had made to Cathmor, of cauſing the *funeral ſong* to be pronounced over the tomb of Cairbar. —— The whole of this paſſage, together with the addreſs of Carril to the ſun, is a lyric meaſure, and was, undoubtedly, intended as a relief to the mind, after the long narrative which preceded it. Tho' the lyric pieces, ſcattered through the poems of Oſſian, are certainly very beautiful in the original, yet they muſt appear much to diſadvantage, ſtripped of numbers, and the harmony of rhyme. In the recitative or narrative part of the poem, the original is rather a meaſured ſort of proſe, than any regular verſification; but it has all that variety of cadences, which ſuit the different ideas, and paſſions of the ſpeakers. —— This book takes up only the ſpace of a few hours.

which bends its trees. Pleaſant is the ſong of the morning from the bard of Erin.

The waves crowd away for fear; they hear the ſound of thy coming forth, o ſun! —— Terrible is thy beauty, ſon of heaven, when death is folded in thy locks; when thou rolleſt thy vapors before thee, over the blaſted hoſt. But pleaſant is thy beam to the hunter, ſitting by the rock in a ſtorm, when thou lookeſt from thy parted cloud, and brighteneſt his dewy locks; he looks down on the ſtreamy vale, and beholds the deſcent of roes. —— How long ſhalt thou riſe on war, and roll, a bloody ſhield, thro' heaven? I ſee the deaths of heroes dark-wandering over thy face! —— Why wander the words of Carril? does the ſon of heaven mourn? he is unſtained in his courſe, ever rejoicing in his fire. —— Roll on, thou careleſs light; thou too, perhaps, muſt fall. Thy dun robe *) may ſeize thee, ſtruggling, in thy ſky.

Pleaſant is the voice of the ſong, o Carril, to Oſſian's ſoul! It is like the ſhower of the morn-

*) By the *dun robe* of the ſun, is probably meant an eclipſe.

morning, when it comes through the ruſtling vale, on which the ſun looks thro' miſt, juſt riſing from his rocks. —— But this is no time, o bard, to ſit down, at the ſtrife of ſong. Fingal is in arms on the vale. Thou ſeeſt the flaming ſhield of the king. His face darkens between his locks. He beholds the wide rolling of Erin. ——

Does not Carril behold that tomb, beſide the roaring ſtream? Three ſtones lift their grey heads, beneath a bending oak. A king is lowly laid: give thou his ſoul to the wind. He is the brother of Cathmor! open his airy hall. —— Let thy ſong be a ſtream of joy to Cairbar's darkened ghoſt.

TEMO-

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK THIRD.

ТИМОРА.

ARGUMENT to Book III.

Morning coming on, Fingal, after a ſpeech to his people, devolves the command on Gaul, the ſon of Morni; it being the cuſtom of the times, that the king ſhould not engage, till the neceſſity of affairs required his ſuperior valour and conduct. —— The king and Oſſian retire to the rock of Cormul, which overlooked the field of battle. The bards ſing the war-ſong. The general conflict is deſcribed. Gaul, the ſon of Morni, diſtinguiſhes himſelf; kills Tur-lathon, chief of Moruth, and other chiefs of leſſer name. —— On the other hand, Foldath, who commanded the Iriſh army (for Cathmor, after the example of Fingal, kept himſelf from battle) fights gallantly; kills Connal, chief of Dun-lora, and advances to engage Gaul himſelf. Gaul, in the mean time, being wounded in the hand, by a random arrow, is covered by Fillan, the ſon of Fingal, who performs prodigies of valour. Night comes on. The horn of Fingal recalls his army. The bards meet them, with a congratulatory ſong, in which the praiſes of Gaul

and

ARGUMENT TO BOOK III.

and Fillan are particularly celebrated. The chiefs sit down at a feast; Fingal misses Connal. The episode of Connal and Duthcaron is introduced; which throws further light on the ancient history of Ireland. Carril is dispatched to raise the tomb of Connal. —— The action of this book takes up the second day, from the opening of the poem.

5 N059

TEMO-

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK THIRD.

*) Who is that, at blue ſtreaming Lubar: by the bending hill of the roes? Tall, he leans on an oak torn from high, by night-

*) This ſudden apoſtrophe, concerning Fingal, the attitude of the king, and the ſcenery in which he is placed, tend to elevate the mind to a juſt conception of the ſucceeding battle. The ſpeech of Fingal is full of that magnanimous generoſity, which diſtinguiſhes his character throughout. The groupe of figures, which the poet places around his father, are picturesque, and deſcribed with great propriety. The diſeaſe of Gaul, the behaviour of Fillan, and the effect which both have on the mind of Fingal, are well imagined. ——

nightly winds. —— Who but Comhal's ſon, brightening in the laſt of his fields? His grey hair is on the breeze: he half-unſheaths the ſword of Luno. His eyes are turned to Moilena, to the dark rolling of foes. —— Doſt thou hear the voice of the king? It is like the burſting of a ſtream, in the deſart, when it comes between its ecchoing rocks, to the blaſted field of the ſun.

Wide-ſkirted comes down the foe! Sons of woody Morven, ariſe. Be ye like the rocks of my land, on whoſe brown ſides are the rolling of waters. A beam of joy comes on my ſoul; I ſee them mighty before me. It is when the foe is feeble, that the ſighs of Fingal are heard; leſt death ſhould come, without renown, and darkneſs dwell on his tomb. —— Who ſhall lead the war, againſt the hoſt of Alnecma? It is, only when danger grows, that my

His ſpeech upon the occaſion is very beautiful in the original. Broken and unequal, the numbers repreſent the agitation of his mind, divided between the admiration excited by the ſilence of Gaul, (when others boaſted of their own actions) and his natural affection for Fillan, —— which the behaviour of that valiant youth had raiſed to the higheſt pitch.

my ſword ſhall ſhine. —— Such was the cuſtom, heretofore, of Trenmor the ruler of winds; and thus deſcended to battle the blue-ſhielded Trathal.

The chiefs bend towards the king: each darkly ſeems to claim the war. They tell, by halves, their mighty deeds: and turn their eyes on Erin. But far before the reſt the ſon of Morni ſtood: ſilent he ſtood, for who had not heard of the battles of Gaul? They roſe within his ſoul. His hand, in ſecret, ſeized the ſword. The ſword which he brought from Strumon, when the ſtrength of Morni failed *).

On

*) Strumon, *ſtream of the hill*, the name of the ſeat of the family of Gaul, in the neighbourhood of Selma. During Gaul's expedition to Tromathon, mentioned in the *poem of Oithona*, Morni his father died. Morni ordered the *ſword of Strumon*, (which had been preſerved, in the family, as a relique, from the days of Colgach, the moſt renowned of his anceſtors) to be laid by his ſide, in the tomb: at the ſame time, leaving it in charge to his ſon, not to take it from thence, till he was reduced to the laſt extremity. Not long after, two of his brothers

On his ſpear ſtood the ſon of Clatho *) in the wandering of his locks. Thrice he raiſed

being ſlain, in battle, by Coldaronnan, chief of Clutha, Gaul went to his father's tomb, to take the ſword. His addreſs to the ſpirit of the deceaſed hero, is the only part now remaining of a poem of Oſſian, on the ſubject. I ſhall here lay it before the reader.

GAUL.

"Breaker of ecchoing ſhields, whoſe head is deep in ſhades; hear me from the darkneſs of Clora, o ſon of Colgach, hear!

No ruſtling, like the eagle's wing, comes over the courſe of my ſtreams. Deep-boſomed in the miſt of the deſart, o king of Strumon, hear!

Dwelleſt thou in the ſhadowy breeze, that pours its dark wave over the graſs? Ceaſe to ſtrew the beard of the thiſtle; o chief of Clora, hear!

Or rideſt thou on a beam, amidſt the dark trouble of clouds? Poureſt thou the loud wind on ſeas, to roll their blue waves over iſles? hear me, father of Gaul; amidſt thy terrors, hear!

The ruſtling of eagles is heard, the murmuring oaks ſhake their heads on the hills: dreadful and pleaſant is thy approach, friend of the dwelling of heroes.

MORNI.

ed his eyes to Fingal; his voice thrice failed him, as he ſpoke. —— Fillan could not boaſt of

MORNI.

Who awakes me, in the midſt of my cloud, where my locks of miſt ſpread on the winds? Mixed with the noiſe of ſtreams, why riſes the voice of Gaul?

GAUL.

My foes are around me, Morni: their dark ſhips deſcend from their waves. Give the ſword of Strumon, that beam which thou hideſt in thy night.

MORNI.

Take the ſword of reſounding Strumon; I look on thy war, my ſon; I look, a dim meteor, from my cloud: blue-ſhielded Gaul, deſtroy."

*) Clatho was the daughter of Cathulla, king of Inistore. Fingal, in one of his expeditions to that iſland, fell in love with Clatho, and took her to wife, after the death of Ros-crána, the daughter of Cormac, King of Ireland.

Clatho was the mother of Ryno, Fillan, and Bosmina, mentioned in the *battle of Lora*, one of the leſſer poems printed in Vol. I. Fillan

of battles; at once he ſtrode away. Bent over a diſtant ſtream he ſtood: the tear hung in his eye. He ſtruck, at times, the thiſtle's head, with his inverted ſpear.

Nor is he unſeen of Fingal. Sidelong he beheld his ſon. He beheld him, with burſting joy; and turned, amidſt his crowded ſoul. In ſilence turned the king towards Mora of woods. He hid the big tear with his locks. —— At length his voice is heard.

*) Firſt of the ſons of Morni; thou rock that defieſt the ſtorm! Lead thou my battle, for the race of low-laid Cormac. No boy's ſtaff

is often called the ſon of Clatho, to diſtinguiſh him from thoſe ſons which Fingal had by Roscrana.

*) Gaul, the ſon of Morni, next to Fingal, is the moſt renowned character introduced by Oſſian in his poems. He is, like Ajax in the Iliad, diſtinguiſhed by his manly taciturnity. The honourable epithets beſtowed on him here, by Fingal, are amazingly expreſſive in the original. There is not a paſſage in all Temora, which loſes ſo much in translation, as this. The firſt part of the ſpeech is rapid and irregular, and is peculiarly calculated to animate the ſoul to war

ſtaff is thy ſpear: no harmleſs beam of light thy ſword. Son of Morni of ſteeds, behold the foe; deſtroy. —— Fillan, obſerve the chief: he is not calm in ſtrife: nor burns he, heedleſs, in battle; my ſon, obſerve the king. He is ſtrong as Lubar's ſtream, but never foams and roars. High on cloudy Mora, Fingal ſhall behold the war. Stand, Oſſian *), near thy father, by the falling ſtream. —— Raiſe the voice, o bards; Morven, move beneath the ſound. It is my latter field; clothe it over with light.

As the ſudden riſing of winds; or diſtant rolling of troubled ſeas, when ſome dark ghoſt, in wrath, heaves the billows over an iſle, the ſeat

war. —— Where the king addreſſes Fillan, the verſification changes to a regular and ſmooth meaſure. The firſt is like torrents ruſhing over broken rocks; the ſecond like the courſe of a full-flowing river, calm but majeſtic. This inſtance ſerves to ſhew, how much it aſſiſts a poet, to alter the meaſure, according to the particular paſſion, that he intends to excite in his reader.

*) Ullin being ſent to Morven with the body of Oſcar, Oſſian attends his father, in quality of chief bard.

ſeat of miſt, on the deep, for many dark-brown years: ſo terrible is the ſound of the hoſt, wide-moving over the field. Gaul is tall before them: the ſtreams glitter within his ſtrides. The bards raiſed the ſong by his ſide; he ſtruck his ſhield between. On the ſkirts of the blaſt, the tuneful voices roſe.

On Crona, ſaid the bards, there burſts a ſtream by night. It ſwells, in its own dark courſe, till morning's early beam. Then comes it white from the hill, with the rocks and their hundred groves. Far be my ſteps from Crona: Death is tumbling there. Be ye a ſtream from Mora, ſons of cloudy Morven.

Who riſes, from his car, on Clutha? The hills are troubled before the king! The dark woods ecchо round, and lighten at his ſteel. See him, amidſt the foe, like Colgach's *) ſportful ghoſt; when he ſcatters the clouds, and

*) There are ſome traditions, but, I believe, of late invention, that this Colgach was the ſame with the Galgacus of Tacitus. He was the anceſtor of Gaul, the ſon of Morni, and appears, from ſome, really ancient, traditions, to have been king,

and rides the eddying wings! It is Morni *) of the bounding steeds! Be like thy father, Gaul!

Selma

king, or Vergobret, of the Caledonians; and hence proceeded the pretensions of the family of Morni to the throne, which created a good deal of disturbance, both to Comhal and his son Fingal. The first was killed in battle by that tribe; and it was after Fingal was grown up, that they were reduced to obedience. Colgach signifies *fiercely-looking;* which is a very proper name for a warrior, and is probably the origin of Calgacus; tho' I believe it a matter of mere conjecture, that the Colgach here mentioned was the same with that hero. —— I cannot help observing, with how much propriety the song of the bards is conducted. Gaul, whose experience might have rendered his conduct cautious in war, has the example of his father, just rushing to battle, set before his eyes. Fillan, on the other hand, whose youth might make him impetuous and unguarded in action, is put in mind of the sedate and serene behaviour of Fingal upon like occasions.

*) The expedition of Morni to Clutha, alluded to here, is handed down in tradition. The poem, on which the tradition was founded, is now lost.

*) Selma is opened wide. Bards take the trembling harps. Ten youths carry the oak of the feaſt. A diſtant ſun-beam marks the hill. The duſky waves of the blaſt fly over the fields of graſs. —— Why art thou ſo ſilent, Morven? —— The king returns with all his fame. Did not the battle roar; yet peaceful is his brow? It roared, and Fingal overcame. — Be like thy father, Fillan.

They moved beneath the ſong. —— High waved their arms, as ruſhy fields, beneath autumnal winds. On Mora ſtood the king in arms. Miſt flies round his buckler broad; as, aloft, it hung on a bough, on Cormul's moſſy rock. —— In ſilence I ſtood by Fingal, and turned my eyes on Cromla's **) wood: leſt I ſhould behold the hoſt, and ruſh amidſt my ſwelling

*) Oſſian is peculiarly happy, in his deſcriptions of ſtill life; and theſe acquire double force, by his placing them near buſy and tumultuous ſcenes. This antitheſis ſerves to animate and heighten the features of poetry.

**) The mountain Cromla was in the neighbourhood of the ſcene of this poem; which was nearly the ſame with that of Fingal.

ſwelling ſoul. My foot is forward on the heath. I glittered, tall, in ſteel: like the falling ſtream of Tromo, which nightly winds bind over with ice. —— The boy ſees it, on high, gleaming to the early beam: towards it he turns his ear, and wonders why it is ſo ſilent.

Nor bent over a ſtream is Cathmor, like a youth in a peaceful field; wide he drew forward the war, a dark and troubled wave. —— But when he beheld Fingal on Mora; his generous pride aroſe. "Shall the chief of Atha „fight, and no king in the field? Foldath, lead „my people forth. Thou art a beam of fire."

Forth-iſſued the chief of Moma, like a cloud, the robe of ghoſts. He drew his ſword, a flame, from his ſide; and bade the battle move. —— The tribes, like ridgy waves, dark pour their ſtrength around. Haughty is his ſtride before them: his red eye rolls in wrath. —— He called the chief of Dunratho *); and his words were heard.

Cormul,

*) Dun-ratho, *a hill, with a plain on its top.* Cormuil, *blue eye.* Foldath dispatches here Cormul, to lie in ambuſh behind the army of the Caledoni-

Cormul, thou beholdeſt that path. It winds green behind the foe. Place thy people there; leſt Morven ſhould eſcape from my ſword. —— Bards of green-valleyed Erin, let no voice of yours ariſe. The ſons of Morven muſt fall without ſong. They are the foes of Cairbar. Hereafter ſhall the traveller meet their dark, thick miſt, on Lena, where it wanders, with their ghoſts, beſide the reedy lake. Never ſhall they riſe, without ſong, to the dwelling of winds.

Cormul darkened, as he went: behind him ruſhed his tribe. They ſunk beyond the rock: Gaul ſpoke to Fillan of Moruth; as his eye purſued the courſe of the dark-eyed king of Dunratho.

Thou beholdeſt the ſteps of Cormul; let thine arm be ſtrong. When he is low, ſon of Fingal,

donians. This ſpeech ſuits well with the character of Foldath, which is, throughout, haughty and preſumptuous. Towards the latter end of this ſpeech, we find the opinion of the times, concerning the unhappineſs of the ſouls of thoſe who were buried without the funeral ſong. This doctrine, no doubt, was inculcated by the bards, to make their order reſpectable and neceſſary.

Fingal, remember Gaul in war. Here I fall forward into battle, amidſt the ridge of ſhields.

The ſign of death aroſe; the dreadful ſound of Morni's ſhield. Gaul poured his voice between. Fingal roſe, high on Mora. He ſaw them, from wing to wing, bending in the ſtrife. Gleaming, on his own dark hill, the ſtrength *) of Atha ſtood. —— They **) were like two ſpirits of heaven, ſtanding each on his gloomy cloud; when they pour abroad the winds, and lift the roaring ſeas. The blue-tumbling of waves is before them, marked with the paths of whales. Themſelves are calm and bright; and the gale lifts their locks of miſt.

What beam of light hangs high in air? It is Morni's dreadful ſword. —— Death is ſtrewed on thy paths, o Gaul; thou foldeſt them together in thy rage. —— Like a young oak falls Turlathon ***), with his branches round

*) By the *ſtrength of Atha*, is meant Cathmor. The expreſſion is common in Homer, and other ancient poets.

**) The two kings.

***) Tur-lathon, *broad trunk of a tree.* Moruth, *great ſtream.* Oichaoma, *mild maid.* Dun-lora, *the hill of the noiſy ſtream.* Duth-caron, *dark-brown man.*

round him. His high-boſomed ſpouſe ſtretches her white arms, in dreams, to the returning king, as ſhe ſleeps by gurgling Moruth, in her disordered locks. It is his ghoſt, Oichoma; the chief is lowly laid. Hearken not to the winds, for Turlathon's ecchoing ſhield. It is pierced, by his ſtreams, and its ſound is paſt away.

Not peaceful is the hand of Foldath: he winds his courſe in blood. Connal met him in fight; they mixed their clanging ſteel. —— Why ſhould mine eyes behold them! Connal, thy locks are grey. —— Thou wert the friend of ſtrangers, at the moſs-covered rock of Dunlora. When the ſkies were rolled together: then thy feaſt was ſpread. The ſtranger heard the winds without; and rejoiced at thy burning oak. —— Why, ſon of Duth-caron, art thou laid in blood! The blaſted tree bends above thee: thy ſhield lies broken near. Thy blood mixes with the ſtream; thou breaker of the ſhields!

*) I took the ſpear, in my wrath: but Gaul ruſhed forward on the foe. The feeble paſs by his ſide; his rage is turned on Moma's

*) The poet ſpeaks in his own perſon.

ma's chief. Now they had raiſed their deathful ſpears: unſeen an arrow came. It pierced the hand of Gaul; his ſteel fell ſounding to earth. —— Young Fillan came *), with Cormul's ſhield, and ſtretched it large before the king. Foldath ſent his ſhout abroad, and kindled all the field: as a blaſt, that lifts the broad-winged flame, over Lumon's **) ecchoing groves.

Son of blue-eyed Clatho, ſaid Gaul, thou art a beam from heaven; that coming on the troubled deep, binds up the tempeſt's wing. — Cormul is fallen before thee. Early art thou in the fame of thy fathers. —— Ruſh not too far, my hero. I cannot lift the ſpear to aid. I ſtand harmleſs in battle: but my voice ſhall

*) Fillan had been dispatched by Gaul, to oppoſe Cormul, who had been ſent by Foldath, to lie in ambuſh behind the Caledonian army. It appears that Fillan had killed Cormul, otherwiſe he could not be ſuppoſed to have poſſeſſed himſelf of the ſhield of that chief. The poet being intent upon the main action, paſſes over ſlightly this feat of Fillan.

**) Lumon, *bending hill*; a mountain in Inis-huna, or that part of South-Britain, which is over-againſt the Iriſh coaſt.

ſhall be poured abroad. —— The ſons of Morven ſhall hear, and remember my former deeds.

His terrible voice roſe on the wind; the hoſt bend forward in the fight. Often had they heard him, at Strumon, when he called them to the chace of the hinds. —— Himſelf ſtood tall, amidſt the war, as an oak in the ſkirts of a ſtorm, which now is clothed, on high, in miſt: then ſhews its broad, waving head; the muſing hunter lifts his eye from his own ruſhy field.

My ſoul purſues thee, o Fillan, thro' the path of thy fame. Thou rolleſt the foe before thee. —— Now Foldath, perhaps, would fly: but night came down with its clouds; and Cathmor's horn was heard. The ſons of Morven heard the voice of Fingal, from Mora's gathered miſt. The bards poured their ſong, like dew, on the returning war.

Who comes from Strumon, they ſaid, amidſt her wandering locks? She is mournful in her ſteps, and lifts her blue eyes towards Erin. Why art thou ſad, Evir-choma *)? Who

*) Evir-choma, *mild and ſtately maid*, the wife of Gaul. She was the daughter of Casdu-conglas, chief of I-dronlo, one of the Hebrides.

Who is like thy chief in renown? He deſcended dreadful to battle; he returns, like a light from a cloud. He lifted the ſword in wrath: they ſhrunk before blue-ſhielded Gaul!

Joy, like the ruſtling gale, comes on the ſoul of the king. He remembers the battles of old; the days, wherein his fathers fought. The days of old return on Fingal's mind, as he beholds the renown of his ſon. As the ſun rejoices, from his cloud, over the tree his beams have raiſed, as it ſhakes its lonely head on the heath: ſo joyful is the king over Fillan.

As the rolling of thunder on hills, when Lara's fields are ſtill and dark; ſuch are the ſteps of Morven pleaſant and dreadful to the ear. They return with their ſound, like eagles to their dark-browed rock, after the prey is torn on the field, the dun ſons of the bounding hind. Your fathers rejoice from their clouds, ſons of ſtreamy Cona.

Such was the nightly voice of bards, on Mora of the hinds. A flame roſe, from an hundred oaks, which winds had torn from Cormul's ſteep. The feaſt is ſpread in the midſt: around ſat the gleaming chiefs. Fingal is there

in his ſtrength; the eagle-wing *) of his helmet ſounds: the ruſtling blaſts of the weſt unequal ruſhed thro' night. Long looked the king in ſilence round: at length, his words were heard.

My ſoul feels a want in our joy. I behold a breach among my friends. —— The head of one tree is low: the ſqually wind pours in on Selma. —— Where is the chief of Dunlora? Ought he to be forgot at the feaſt? When did he forget the ſtranger, in the midſt of his ecchoing hall? —— Ye are ſilent in my preſence! —— Connal is then no more. —— Joy meet thee, o warrior, like a ſtream of light. Swift be thy courſe to thy fathers, in the folds of the mountain-winds. —— Oſſian, thy ſoul is fire: kindle the memory of the king. Awake the battles of Connal, when firſt he ſhone in war. The locks of Connal were grey; his

*) From this, and ſeveral other paſſages, in this poem, it appears, that the kings of Morven and Ireland had a plume of eagle's feathers, by way of ornament, in their helmets. It was from this diſtinguiſhed mark that Oſſian knew Cathmor, in the ſecond book; which cuſtom, probably, he had borrowed, from the former monarchs of Ireland, of the race of the Caël or Caledonians.

his days of youth *) were mixed with mine. In one day Duth-caron firſt ſtrung our bows, againſt the roes of Dun-lora.

Many, I ſaid, are our paths to battle, in green-hilled Inisfail. Ofte did our ſails ariſe, over the blue-tumbling waters; when we came, in other days, to aid the race of Conar.

The ſtrife roared once in Alnecma, at the foam-covered ſtreams of Duth-úla **). With Cor-

*) After the death of Comhal, and during the uſurpation of the tribe of Morni, Fingal was educated in private by Duth-caron. It was then he contracted that intimacy with Connal the ſon of Duth-caron, which occaſions his regretting ſo much his fall. When Fingal was grown up, he ſoon reduced the tribe of Morni; and, as it appears from the ſubſequent epiſode, ſent Duth-caron and his ſon Connal to the aid of Cormac, the ſon of Conar, king of Ireland, who was driven to the laſt extremity, by the inſurrections of the Firbolg. This epiſode throws farther light on the contelts between the Caël and Firbolg; and is the more valuable upon that account.

**) Duth-úla, a river in Connaught; it ſignifies, *dark-ruſhing water.*

Cormac deſcended to battle Duth-caron from cloudy Morven. Nor deſcended Duth-caron alone, his ſon was by his ſide, the long-haired youth of Connal, lifting the firſt of his ſpears. Thou didſt command them, o Fingal, to aid the king of Erin.

Like the burſting ſtrength of a ſtream, the ſons of Bolga ruſhed to war: Colc-ulla *) was before them, the chief of blue-ſtreaming Atha. The battle was mixed on the plain, like the meeting of two ſtormy ſeas. Cormac **) ſhone in

*) Colc-ulla, *firm look in readineſs*; he was the brother of Borbar-duthul, the father of Cairbar and Cathmor, who after the death of Cormac, the ſon of Artho, ſucceſſively mounted.

**) Cormac, the ſon of Conar, the ſecond king of Ireland, of the race of the Caledonians. This inſurrection of the Firbolg happened towards the latter end of the long reign of Cormac. From ſeveral epiſodes and poems, it appears, that he never poſſeſſed the Iriſh throne peaceably. —— The party of the family of Atha had made ſeveral attempts to overturn the ſucceſſion in the race of Conar, before they effected it, in the minority of Cormac, the ſon of Artho. —— Ireland, from

in his own ſtrife, bright as the forms of his fathers. But, far before the reſt, Duth-caron hewed down the foe. Nor ſlept the arm of Connal, by his father's ſide. Atha prevailed on the plain: like ſcattered miſt, fled the people of Ullin *).

Then

— from the moſt ancient accounts concerning it, ſeems to have been always ſo diſturbed by domeſtic commotions, that it is difficult to ſay, whether it ever was, for any length of time, ſubject to one monarch. It is certain, that every province, if not every ſmall diſtrict, had its own king. One of thoſe petty princes aſſumed, at times, the title of king of Ireland, and, on account of his ſuperior force, or in caſes of public danger, was acknowledged by the reſt as ſuch: but the ſucceſſion, from father to ſon, does not appear to have been eſtabliſhed. — It was the diviſions amongſt themſelves, ariſing from the bad conſtitution of their government, that, at laſt, ſubjected the Iriſh to a foreign yoke.

*) The inhabitants of Ullin or Ulſter, who were of the race of the Caledonians, ſeem, alone to have been the firm friends to the ſucceſſion in the family of Conar. The Firbolg were only ſubject to them by conſtraint, and embraced every opportunity to throw off their yoke.

Then roſe the ſword of Duth-caron, and the ſteel of broad-ſhielded Connal. They ſhaded their flying friends, like two rocks with their heads of pine. —— Night came down on Duth-ula: ſilent ſtrode the chiefs over the field. A mountain-ſtream roared acroſs the path, nor could Duth-caron bound over its courſe, —— Why ſtands my father? ſaid Connal. —— I hear the ruſhing foe.

Fly, Connal, he ſaid; thy father's ſtrength begins to fail. —— I come wounded from battle; here let me reſt in night. —— "But thou ſhalt not remain alone, ſaid Connal's burſting ſigh. My ſhield is an eagle's wing to cover the king of Dun-lora." He bends dark above the chief: the mighty Duth-caron dies.

Day roſe, and night returned. No lonely bard appeared, deep-muſing on the heath: and could Connal leave the tomb of his father, till he ſhould receive his fame? —— He bent the bow againſt the roes of Duth-ula; he ſpread the lonely feaſt. —— Seven nights he laid his head on the tomb, and ſaw his father in his dreams. He ſaw him rolled dark, in a blaſt, like the vapour of reedy Lego. —— At length the

the ſteps of Colgan *) came, the bard of high Temora. Duth-caron received his fame, and brightened, as he roſe on the wind.

Pleaſant

*) Colgan, the ſon of Cathmul, was the principal bard of Cormac Mac-Conar, king of Ireland. Part of an old poem, on the loves of Fingal and Ros-crána, is ſtill preſerved, and goes under the name of this Colgan; but whether it is of his compoſition, or the production of a latter age, I ſhall not pretend to determine. Be that as it will, it appears, from the obſolete phraſes which it contains, to be very ancient; and its poetical merit may perhaps excuſe me, for laying a tranſlation of it before the reader. What remains of the poem, is a dialogue in a lyric meaſure, between Fingal and Ros-crána, the daughter of Cormac. She begins with a ſoliloquy, which is overheard by Fingal.

ROS-CRANA.

"By night, came a dream to Ros-crána! I feel my beating ſoul. No viſion of the forms of the death, came to the blue eyes of Erin. But, riſing from the wave of the north, I beheld him bright in his locks. I beheld the ſon of the king. My beating ſoul is high. I laid my head down

Pleaſant to the ear, ſaid Fingal, is the praiſe of the kings of men; when their bows are

in night; again aſcended the form. Why delayeſt thou thy coming, young rider of ſtreamy waves?

But, there, far-diſtant, he comes; where ſeas roll their green ridges in miſt! Young dweller of my ſoul; why doſt thou delay? ——————

FINGAL.

It was the ſoft voice of Moi-lena! the pleaſant breeze of the valley of roes! But why doſt thou hide thee in ſhades? Young love of heroes, riſe! —— Are not thy ſteps covered with light? In thy groves thou appeareſt, Ros-crána, like the ſun in the gathering of clouds. Why doſt thou hide thee in ſhades? Young love of heroes, riſe!

ROS-CRANA.

My fluttering ſoul is high! —— Let me turn from the ſteps of the king. He has heard my ſecret voice: and ſhall my blue eyes roll, in his preſence? —— Roe of the hill of moſs, toward thy dwelling I move. Meet me, ye breezes of Mora, as I move thro' the valley of winds. —— But why ſhould he aſcend his ocean? —— Son

of

are ſtrong in battle; when they ſoften at the ſight of the ſad. —— Thus let my name be renown-

of heroes, my ſoul is thine! —— My ſteps ſhall not move to the deſart: the light of Ros-crána is here.

FINGAL.

It was the light tread of a ghoſt, the fair dweller of eddying winds. Why deceiveſt thou me, with thy voice? Here let me reſt in ſhades. —— Shouldſt thou ſtretch thy white arm, from thy grove, thou ſun-beam of Cormac of Erin!

ROS-CRANA.

He is gone! and my blue eyes are dim; faint-rolling, in all my tears. But, there, I behold him, alone; king of Morven, my ſoul is thine. Ah me! what clanging of armour! —— Colc-ulla of Atha is near!" ——

Fingal, as we learn from the epiſode, with which the fourth book begins, undertook an expedition into Ireland, to aid Cormac Mac-conar againſt the inſurrections of the Fir-bolg. It was then he ſaw, fell in love with, and married Ros-crána, the daughter of Cormac. —— Some traditions give this poem to Oſſian: but, from ſe-

renowned, when bards ſhall lighten my riſing ſoul. Carril, ſon of Kinfena; take the bards, and raiſe a tomb. To night let Connal dwell within his narrow houſe: let not the ſoul of the valiant wander on the winds. —— Faint glimmers the moon on Moi-lena, thro' the broad-headed groves of the hill: raiſe ſtones, beneath its beams, to all the fallen in war. — Tho' no chiefs were they, yet their hands were ſtrong in fight. They were my rock in danger; the mountain, from which I ſpread my eagle-wings. Thence am I renowned: Carril, forget not the low.

Loud, at once, from the hundred bards, roſe the ſong of the tomb. Carril ſtrode before them, they are the murmur of ſtreams behind him. Silence dwells in the vales of Moi-lena,

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veral circumſtances, I conclude it to be an imitation, but a very happy one, of the manner of that poet. —— The elegance of the ſentiment, and beauty of the imagery, however, refer the compoſition of it to an æra of remote antiquity: for, the nearer we approach to our own times, the leſs beautiful are the compoſitions of the bards.

lena, where each, with its own dark ſtream, is winding between the hills. I heard the voice of the bards, leſſening, as they moved along. I leaned forward from my ſhield; and felt the kindling of my ſoul. Half-formed the words of my ſong, burſt forth upon the wind. So hears a tree, on the vale, the voice of ſpring around: it pours its green leaves to the ſun, and ſhakes its lonely head. The hum of the mountain-bee is near it; the hunter ſees it, with joy, from the blaſted heath.

Young Fillan, at a diſtance ſtood. His helmet lay glittering on the ground. His dark hair is looſe to the blaſt: a beam of light is Clatho's ſon. He heard the words of the king, with joy; and leaned forward on his ſpear.

My ſon, ſaid car-borne Fingal; I ſaw thy deeds, and my ſoul was glad. The fame of our fathers, I ſaid, burſts from its gathered cloud. —— Thou art brave, ſon of Clatho; but headlong in the ſtrife. So did not Fingal advance, tho' he never feared a foe. —— Let thy people be a ridge behind; they are thy ſtrength in the field. —— Then ſhalt thou be long renowned, and behold the tombs of thy fathers.

fathers. The memory of the paſt returns, my deeds in other years: when firſt I deſcended from ocean on the green-valleyed iſle. —— We bend towards the voice of the king. The moon looks abroad from her cloud. The grey-ſkirted miſt is near, the dwelling of the ghoſts.

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TEMO-

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK FOURTH.

ARGUMENT TO BOOK IV.

The ſecond night continues. Fingal relates, at the feaſt, his own firſt expedition into Ireland, and his marriage with Ros-crána, the daughter of Cormac, king of that iſland. —— The Iriſh chiefs convene in the preſence of Cathmor. The ſituation of the king deſcribed. The ſtory of Sul-malla, the daughter of Conmor, king of Inis-huna, who, in the diſguiſe of a young warrior, had followed Cathmor to the war. The ſullen behaviour of Foldath, who had commanded in the battle of the preceding day, renews the difference between him and Malthos: but Cathmor, interpoſing, ends it. The chiefs feaſt, and hear the ſong of Fonar the bard. Cathmor returns to reſt, at a diſtance from the army. The ghoſt of his brother Cairbar appears to him in a dream; and obſcurely foretels the iſſue of the war. — The ſoliloquy of the king. He diſcovers Sul-malla. Morning comes. Her ſoliloquy cloſes the book.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK FOURTH.

*) Beneath an oak, ſaid the king, I ſat on Selma's ſtreamy rock, when Connal roſe, from the ſea, with the broken ſpear of Duth-caron. Far-diſtant ſtood the youth, and turned

*) This epiſode has an immediate connection with the ſtory of Connal and Duth-caron, in the latter end of the third book. Fingal, ſitting beneath an oak, near the palace of Selma, diſcovers Connal juſt landing from Ireland. The danger which threatened Cormac king of Ireland, induces him to ſail immediately to that iſland. —— The ſtory is introduced, by the king, as a pattern for the future behaviour of Fillan, whoſe raſhneſs in the preceding battle is reprimanded.

turned away his eyes: for he remembered the steps of his father, on his own green hills. I darkened in my place: dusky thoughts rolled over my soul. The kings of Erin rose before me. I half-unsheathed my sword. —— Slowly approached the chiefs; they lifted up their silent eyes. Like a ridge of clouds, they wait for the bursting-forth of my voice: it was to them, a wind from heaven, to roll the mist away.

I bade my white sails to rise, before the roar of Cona's wind. Three hundred youths looked, from their waves, on Fingal's bossy shield. High on the mast it hung, and marked the dark-blue sea. —— But when the night came down, I struck, at times, the warning boss: I struck, and looked on high, for fiery-haired Ul-erin *).

Nor wanting was the star of heaven: it travelled red between the clouds: I pursued the love-

*) Ul-erin, *the guide to Ireland*, a star known by that name in the days of Fingal, and very useful to those who sailed, by night, from the Hebrides, or Caledonia, to the coast of Ulster. We find, from this passage, that navigation was considerably advanced, at this time, among the Caledonians.

lovely beam on the faint-gleaming deep. —— With morning, Erin roſe in miſt. We came into the bay of Moi-leha, where its blue waters tumbled, in the boſom of ecchoing woods. —— Here Cormac, in his ſecret hall, avoided the ſtrength of Colculla. Nor he alone avoids the foe: the blue eye of Ros-crana *), white-handed maid, the daughter of the king.

Grey, on his pointleſs ſpear, came forth the aged ſteps of Cormac. He ſmiled, from his waving locks: but grief was in his ſoul. He ſaw us few before him, and his ſigh aroſe. —— I ſee the arms of Trenmor, he ſaid; and theſe are the ſteps of the king! Fingal! thou

*) Ros-crána, *the beam of the riſing ſun*; ſhe was the mother of Oſſian. The Iriſh bards relate ſtrange fictions concerning this princeſs. The character given of her here, and in other poems of Oſſian, does not tally with their accounts. Their ſtories, however, concerning Fingal, if they mean him by *Fion Mac-Combal*, are ſo inconſiſtent and notoriously fabulous, that they do not deſerve to be mentioned; for they evidently bear, along with them, the marks of late invention.

thou art a beam of light to Cormac's darkened ſoul. —— Early is thy fame, my ſon: but ſtrong are the foes of Erin. They are like the roar of ſtreams in the land, ſon of car-borne Comhal.

Yet they may be rolled *) away, I ſaid in my riſing ſoul. We are not of the race of the feeble, king of blue-ſhielded hoſts. Why ſhould fear come amongſt us, like a ghoſt of night? The ſoul of the valiant grows, as foes increaſe in the field. Roll no darkneſs, king of Erin, on the young in war.

The burſting tears of the king came down. He ſeized my hand in ſilence. —— "Race of the daring Trenmor, I roll no cloud before thee. Thou burneſt in the fire of thy fathers. I behold thy fame. It marks thy courſe in battles, like a ſtream of light. —— But wait the coming of Cairbar **): my ſon muſt join thy

*) Cormac had ſaid, that his foes were *like the roar of ſtreams*, and Fingal continues the metaphor. The ſpeech of the young hero is ſpirited, and conſiſtent with that ſedate intrepidity, which eminently diſtinguiſhes his character throughout.

**) Cairbar, the ſon of Cormac, was afterwards king of Ireland. His reign was ſhort. He was ſucceeded

thy ſword. He calls the ſons of Ullin, from all their diſtant ſtreams."

We came to the hall of the king, where it roſe in the midſt of rocks: rocks, on whoſe dark ſides, were the marks of ſtreams of old. Broad oaks bend around with their moſs: the thick birch waves its green head. Half-hid, in her ſhady grove, Ros-crana raiſed the ſong. Her white hands roſe on the harp. I beheld her blue-rolling eyes. She was like a ſpirit*) of heaven, half-folded in the ſkirt of a cloud.

Three

ceeded by his ſon Artho, the father of that Cormac, who was murdered by Cairbar the ſon of Borbar-duthul. —— Cairbar, the ſon of Cormac, long after his ſon Artho was grown to man's eſtate, had, by his wife Beltanno, another ſon, whoſe name was Ferad-artho. —— He was the only one remaining of the race of Conar the firſt king of Ireland, when Fingal's expedition againſt Cairbar the ſon of Borbar-duthul happened. See more of Ferad-artho in the eighth book.

*) The attitude of Ros-crana is aptly illuſtrated by this ſimile; for the ideas of thoſe times, concerning the ſpirits of the deceaſed, were not ſo gloo-

Three days we feaſted at Moi-lena: ſhe roſe bright amidſt my troubled ſoul. —— Cormac beheld me dark. He gave the white-boſomed maid.

my and disagreeable, as thoſe of ſucceeding ages. The ſpirits of women, it was ſuppoſed, retained that beauty, which they poſſeſſed while living, and transported themſelves, from place to place, with that gliding motion, which Homer aſcribes to the gods. The deſcriptions, which poets, leſs antient than Oſſian, have left us of thoſe beautiful figures, that appeared ſometimes on the hills, are elegant and picturesque. They compare them to the *rain-bow on ſtreams:* or, *the gliding of ſun-beams on the hills.* I ſhall here translate a paſſage of on old ſong, where both theſe beautiful images are mentioned together.

A chief who lived three centuries ago, returning from the war, underſtood that his wife or miſtreſs was dead. The bard introduces him ſpeaking the following ſoliloquy, when he came, within ſight of the place, where he had left her, at his departure.

"My ſoul darkens in ſorrow. I behold not the ſmoak of my hall. No grey dog bounds at my ſtreams. Silence dwells in the valley of trees.

"Is

maid. —— She came with bending eye, amidſt the wandering of her heavy locks. —— She came. —— Straight the battle roared. — Colc-ulla ruſhed; —— I ſeized my ſpear. My ſword roſe, with my people, againſt the ridgy foe. Almecma fled. Colc-ulla fell. Fingal returned with fame.

He is renowned, o Fillan, who fights, in the ſtrength of his people. The bard purſues his ſteps, thro' the land of the foe. —— But he who fights alone; few are his deeds to other times. He ſhines, to-day, a mighty light. To-morrow, he is low. One ſong contains his

"Is that a rain-bow on Crunath? It flies; — and the ſky is dark. Again, thou moveſt, bright, on the heath, thou ſun-beam cloathed in a ſhower! —— Hah! it is ſhe, my love: her gliding courſe on the boſom of winds!

In ſucceeding times the beauty of Ros-crana paſſed into a proverb; and the higheſt compliment, that could be paid to a woman, was to compare her perſon with *the daughter of Cormac.*

'S tu fein an Ros-crána.
Siel Chormaec na n'ioma lán.

his fame. His name is on one dark field. He is forgot, but where his tomb ſends forth the tufts of graſs.

Such were the words of Fingal, on Mora of the roes. Three bards, from the rock of Cormul, poured down the pleaſant ſong. Sleep deſcended, in the ſound, on the broad-ſkirted hoſt. Carril returned, with the bards, from the tomb of Dun-lora's king. The voice of morning ſhall not come, to the duſky bed of the hero. No more ſhalt thou hear the tread of roes, around thy narrow houſe.

*) As roll the troubled clouds, round a meteor of night, when they brighten their ſides, with its light, along the heaving ſea: ſo gathered Erin, around the gleaming form of Atha's

*) The poet changes the ſcene to the Iriſh camp. The images introduced here are magnificent, and have that ſort of *terrible beauty*, if I may uſe the expreſſion, which occurs ſo frequently in the compoſitions of Oſſian. The troubled motion of the army, and the ſedate and careleſs attitude of Cathmor, form a contraſt, which, as I have before remarked, heightens the features of deſcription, and is calculated to enliven poetry.

Atha's king. He, tall in the midſt, careleſs lifts, at times, his ſpear: as ſwells or falls the ſound of Fonar's diſtant harp.

*) Near him leaned, againſt a rock, Sul-malla

*) In order to illuſtrate this paſſage, I ſhall give here the hiſtory, on which it is founded, as I have gathered it from other poems. The nation of the Firbolg, who inhabited the ſouth of Ireland, being originally deſcended from the Belgæ, who poſſeſſed the ſouth and ſouth-weſt coaſt of Britain, kept up, for many ages, an amicable correſpondence with their mother-country; and ſent aid to the Britiſh Belgæ, when they were preſſed by the Romans or other new-comers from the continent. Con-mor, king of Inis-huna, (that part of South-Britain which is over-againſt the Iriſh coaſt) being attacked, by what enemy is not mentioned, ſent for aid to Cairbar, lord of Atha, the moſt potent chief of the Firbolg. Cairbar dispatched his brother Cathmor to the aſſiſtance of Conmor. Cathmor, after various viciſſitudes of fortune, put an end to the war, by the total defeat of the enemies of Inis-huna, and returned in triumph to the reſidence of Con-mor. There, at a feaſt, Sul-malla,

malla *) of blue eyes, the white-boſomed daughter of Conmor king of Inis-huna. To his aid came blue-ſhielded Cathmor, and rolled his foes away. Sul-malla beheld him ſtately in the hall of feaſts; nor careleſs rolled the eyes of Cathmor on the long-haired maid.

The third day aroſe, and Fithil **) came from Erin of the ſtreams. He told of the lifting

the daughter of Con-mor, fell deſperately in love with Cathmor, who, before her paſſion was diſcloſed, was recalled to Ireland by his brother Cairbar, upon the news of the intended expedition of Fingal, to re-eſtabliſh the family of Conar on the Iriſh throne. —— The wind being contrary, Cathmor remained, for three days, in a neighbouring bay; during which time Sul-malla diſguiſed herſelf, in the habit of a young warrior, and came to offer him her ſervice, in the war. Cathmor accepted of the propoſal, ſailed for Ireland, and arrived in Ulſter, a few days before the death of Cairbar.

*) Sul-malla, *ſlowly rolling eyes.* Coan-mor, *mild and tall.* Inis-huna, *green iſland.*

**) Fithil, *an inferior bard.* It may either be taken here for the proper name of a man, or in the literal

lifting up of the ſhield *) on Morven, and the danger of red-haired Cairbar. Cathmor raiſed the ſail at Cluba; but the winds were in other lands.

literal ſenſe, as the bards were the heralds and meſſengers of thoſe times. Cathmor, it is probable, was abſent, when the rebellion of his brother Cairbar, and the aſſaſſination of Cormac, king of Ireland, happened. The traditions, which are handed down with the poem, ſay that Cathmor and his followers had only arrived, from Inis-huna, three days before the death of Cairbar, which ſufficiently clears his character from any imputation of being concerned in the conſpiracy, with his brother.

*) The ceremony which was uſed by Fingal, when he prepared for an expedition, is related, by Oſſian, in one of his leſſer poems. A bard, at midnight, went to the hall, where the tribes feaſted upon ſolemn occaſions, raiſed the *war-ſong*, and thrice called the ſpirits of their deceaſed anceſtors, to come, *on their clouds*, to behold the actions of their children. He then fixed the *ſhield of Trenmor*, on a tree on the rock of Selma, ſtriking it, at times, with the blunt end of a ſpear, and ſinging the war-ſong between. Thus he did, for three ſucceſſive nights, and in the

lands. Three days he remained on the coaſt, and turned his eyes on Conmor's halls. —— He remembered the daughter of ſtrangers, and his ſigh aroſe. —— Now when the winds awaked the wave: from the hill came a youth in arms; to lift the ſword with Cathmor in his ecchoing field. —— It was the white-armed Sul-malla: ſecret ſhe dwelt beneath her helmet. Her ſteps were in the path of the king; on him her blue eyes rolled with joy, when he lay by his roaring ſtreams. —— But Cathmor thought, that, on Lumon, ſhe ſtill purſued the roes: or far, on a rock, ſtretched her white hand to the wind; to feel its courſe from Inis-fail, the green dwelling of her love. He had promiſed to return, with his white-boſomed ſails. —— The maid is near thee, king of Atha, leaning on her rock.

The

mean time, meſſengers were dispatched to convence the tribes; or, as Oſſian expreſſes it, *to call them from all their ſtreams.* This phraſe alludes to the ſituation of the reſidences of the clans, which were generally fixed in valleys, where the torrents of the neighbouring mountains were collected into one body, and became *large ſtreams* or rivers. —— *The lifting up of the ſhield,* was the phraſe for beginning a war.

The tall forms of the chiefs ſtood around; all but dark-browed Foldath *). He ſtood beneath a diſtant tree, rolled into his haughty ſoul. His buſhy hair whiſtles in wind. At times, burſts the hum of a ſong. —— He ſtruck the tree, at length, in wrath; and ruſhed before the king.

Calm and ſtately, to the beam of the oak, aroſe the form of young Hidalla. His hair falls round his bluſhing cheek, in wreaths of waving light. Soft was his voice in Clon-ra **), in the valley of his fathers; when he touched the harp, in the hall, near his roaring ſtreams.

King

*) The ſurly attitude of Foldath, is a proper preamble to his after behaviour. Chaffed with the diſappointment of the victory, which he promiſed himſelf, he becomes paſſionate and over-bearing. The quarrel, which ſucceeds between him and Malthos, was, no doubt, introduced by the poet, to raiſe the character of Cathmor, whoſe ſuperior worth ſhines forth, in his manly manner of ending the difference between the chiefs.

**) Claon-rath, *winding field*. The *th* are ſeldom pronounced audibly in the Galic language.

King of Erin, ſaid the youth, now is the time of feaſts. Bid the voice of bards ariſe, and roll the night away. The ſoul returns, from ſong, more terrible to war. —— Darkneſs ſettles on Inis-fail: from hill to hill bend the ſkirted clouds. Far and grey, on the heath, the dreadful ſtrides of ghoſts are ſeen: the ghoſts of thoſe who fell, bend forward to their ſong. —— Bid thou the harps to riſe, and brighten the dead, on their wandering blaſts.

Be all the dead forgot, ſaid Foldath's burſting wrath. Did not I fail in the field, and ſhall I hear the ſong? Yet was not my courſe harmleſs in battle: blood was a ſtream around my ſteps. But the feeble were behind me, and the foe has eſcaped my ſword. —— In Clon-ra's vale touch thou the harp; let Dura anſwer to thy voice; while ſome maid looks, from the wood, on thy long, yellow locks. — Fly from Lubar's ecchoing plain: it is the field of heroes.

King of Temora *), Malthos ſaid, it is thine to lead in war. Thou art a fire to our eyes,

*) This ſpeech of Malthos is, throughout, a ſevere reprimand to the bluſtering behaviour of Foldath.

It

eyes, on the dark-brown field. Like a blaſt thou haſt paſt over hoſts, and laid them low in blood: but who has heard thy words returning from the field? —— The wrathful delight in death: their remembrance reſts on the wounds of their ſpear. Strife is folded in their thoughts: their words are ever heard. — Thy courſe, chief of Moma, was like a troubled ſtream. The dead were rolled on thy path: but others alſo lift the ſpear. We were not feeble behind thee, but the foe was ſtrong.

The king beheld the riſing rage, and bending forward of either chief: for half-unſheathed, they held their ſwords: and rolled their ſilent eyes. —— Now would they have mixed in horrid fray, had not the wrath of Cathmor burned. He drew his ſword: it gleamed thro' night, to the high-flaming oak.

Sons

It abounds with that laconic eloquence, and indirect manner of addreſs, which is ſo juſtly admired in the ſhort ſpeech of Ajax, in the ninth book of the Iliad.

Sons of pride, ſaid the king, allay your ſwelling ſouls. Retire in night. —— Why ſhould my rage ariſe? Should I contend with both in arms? —— It is no time for ſtrife. Retire, ye clouds at my feaſt. Awake my ſoul no more. —— They ſunk from the king on either ſide; like *) two columns of morning-miſt, when the ſun riſes, between them, on his glittering rocks. Dark is their rolling on either ſide; each towards its reedy pool.

Silent ſat the chiefs at the feaſt. They looked, at times, on Atha's king, where he ſtrode, on his rock, amidſt his ſettling ſoul. —— The hoſt lay, at length, on the field: ſleep

*) The poet ſhould ſcarcely find, in all nature, a compariſon ſo favourable as this to the ſuperiority of Cathmor over his two chiefs. I ſhall illuſtrate this paſſage with another from a fragment of an ancient poem, juſt now in my hands. —— "As the ſun is above the vapours, which his beams have raiſed; ſo is the ſoul of the king above the ſons of fear. They roll dark below him; he rejoices in the orbe of his beams. But when feeble deeds wander on the ſoul of the king, he is a darkened ſun rolled along the ſky: the valley is ſad below: flowers wither beneath the drops of the night."

ſleep deſcended on Moi-lena. —— The voice of Fonar roſe alone, beneath his diſtant tree. It roſe in the praiſe of Cathmor ſon of Larthon *) of Lumon. But Cathmor did not hear

*) Lear-thon, *ſea-wave*, the name of the chief of that colony of the Fir-bolg, which firſt migrated into Ireland. Larthon's firſt ſettlement in that country is related in the ſeventh book. He was the anceſtor of Cathmor; and is here called *Larthon of Lumon*, from a high hill of that name in Inis-huna, the ancient ſeat of the Fir-bolg. —— The poet preſerves the character of Cathmor throughout. He had mentioned, in the firſt book, the averſion of that chief to praiſe, and we find him here lying at the ſide of a ſtream, that the noiſe of it might drown the voice of Fonar, who, according to the cuſtom of the times, ſung his eulogium in his *evening-ſong*. Tho' other chiefs, as well as Cathmor, might be averſe to hear their own praiſe, we find it the univerſal policy of the times, to allow the bards, to be as extravagant as they pleaſed, in their encomiums on the leaders of armies, in the preſence of their people. The vulgar, who had no great ability to judge for themſelves, received the characters of their princes, entirely upon the faith of the bards. The good effects, which an high opinion of its ruler has

hear his praiſe. He lay at the roar of a ſtream: The ruſtling breeze of night flew over his whiſtling locks.

Cairbar came to his dreams, half-ſeen from his low-hung cloud. Joy roſe darkly in his face: he had heard the ſong of Carril *). —— A

has upon a community, are too obvious to require explanation; on the other hand, diſtruſt of the abilities of leaders produce the worſt conſequences.

*) Carril, the ſon of Kinfena, by the orders of Oſſian, ſung the funeral elegy at the tomb of Cairbar. See the ſecond book, towards the end. In all the poems of Oſſian, the viſit of ghoſts, to their living friends, are ſhort, and their language obſcure; both which circumſtances tend to throw a ſolemn gloom on theſe ſupernatural ſcenes. Towards the latter end of the ſpeech of the ghoſt of Cairbar, he fortels the death of Cathmor, by enumerating thoſe ſignals, which, according to the opinion of the times, preceded the death of a perſon renowned. It was thought, that the ghoſts of deceaſed bards ſung, for three nights pre-

A blaſt ſuſtained his dark-ſkirted cloud; which he ſeized in the boſom of night, as he roſe, with his fame, towards his airy hall. Half-mixed with the noiſe of the ſtream, he poured his feeble words.

Joy meet the ſoul of Cathmor: his voice was heard on Moi-lena. The bard gave his ſong to Cairbar: he travels on the wind. My form is in my father's hall, like the gliding of a terrible light, which winds thro' the deſart, in a ſtormy night. —— No bard ſhall be wanting at thy tomb, when thou art lowly laid. The ſons of ſong love the valiant. —— Cathmor, thy name is a pleaſant gale. —— The mournful ſounds ariſe! On Lubar's field there is a voice! —— Louder ſtill ye ſhadowy ghoſts! the dead were full of fame. —— Shrilly ſwells the feeble ſound. —— The rougher blaſt alone is heard! —— Ah, ſoon is Cathmor low!

Rolled into himſelf he flew, wide on the boſom of his blaſt. The old oak felt his de-

partu-

preceding the death (near the place where his tomb was to be raiſed) round an unſubſtantial figure, which repreſented the body of the perſon who was to die.

parture, and ſhook its whiſtling head. The king ſtarted from reſt, and took his dreadful ſpear. He lifts his eyes around. He ſees but dark-ſkirted night.

*) It was the voice of the king; but now his form is gone. Unmarked is your path in the air, ye children of the night. Often, like a reflected beam, are ye ſeen in the deſart wild; but ye retire in your blaſts, before our ſteps approach. —— Go then, ye feeble race! knowledge with you there is none. Your joys are weak, and like the dreams of our reſt, or the light-winged thought that flies acroſs the ſoul. —— Shall Cathmor ſoon be low? Darkly laid in his narrow houſe? where no morning comes with her half-opened eyes. —— Away, thou ſhade! to fight is mine, all further thought away! I ruſh forth, on eagle-wings, to ſeize my

*) The ſoliloquy of Cathmor abounds with that magnanimity and love of fame, which conſtitute the hero. Tho' ſtaggered at firſt with the prediction of Cairbar's ghoſt, he ſoon comforts himſelf with the agreeable proſpect of his future renown; and like Achilles, prefers a ſhort and glorious life, to an obſcure length of years in retirement and eaſe.

my beam of fame. —— In the lonely vale of ſtreams, abides the little *) ſoul. —— Years roll

*) From this paſſage we learn, in what extreme contempt an indolent and unwarlike life was held in thoſe days of heroiſm. Whatever a philoſopher may ſay, in praiſe of quiet and retirement, I am far from thinking, but they weaken and debaſe the human mind. When the faculties of the ſoul are not exſerted, they loſe their vigour, and low and circumſcribed notions take the place of noble and enlarged ideas. Action, on the contrary, and the viciſſitudes of fortune which attend it, call forth, by turns, all the powers of the mind, and, by exerciſing, ſtrengthen them. Hence it is, that in great and opulent ſtates, when property and indolence are ſecured to individuals, we ſeldom meet with that ſtrength of mind, which is ſo common in a nation, not far advanced in civilization. It is a curious, but juſt obſervation; that great kingdoms ſeldom produce great characters, which muſt be altogether attributed to that indolence and diſſipation, which are the inſeparable companions of too much property and ſecurity. Rome, it is certain, had more real great men within it, when its power was confined within the narrow bounds of Latium, than when its dominion extended

roll on, ſeaſons return, but he is ſtill unknown. —— In a blaſt comes cloudy death, and lays his grey head low. His ghoſt is rolled on the vapour of the fenny field. Its courſe is never on hills, or moſſy vales of wind. —— So ſhall not Cathmor depart, no boy in the field was he, who only marks the bed of roes, upon the ecchoing hills. My iſſuing forth was with kings, and my joy in dreadful plains: where broken hoſts are rolled away, like ſeas before the wind.

So ſpoke the king of Alnecma, brightening in his riſing ſoul: valour, like a pleaſant flame, is gleaming within his breaſt. Stately is his ſtride on the heath: the beam of eaſt is poured around. He ſaw his grey hoſt on the field, wide-ſpreading their ridges in light. He rejoiced, like a ſpirit of heaven, whoſe ſteps come

over all the known world; and one petty ſtate of the Saxon heptarchy had, perhaps, as much genuine ſpirit in it, as the two Britiſh kingdoms united. As a ſtate, we are much more powerful than our anceſtors, but we would loſe by comparing individuals with them.

come forth on his ſeas, when he beholds them peaceful round, and all the winds are laid. But ſoon he awakes the waves, and rolls them large to ſome ecchoing coaſt.

On the ruſhy bank of a ſtream, ſlept the daughter of Inis-huna. The helmet *) had fallen from her head. Her dreams were in the lands of her fathers. There morning was on the field: grey ſtreams leapt down from the rocks; the breezes, in ſhadowy waves, fly o'er the ruſhy fields. There is the ſound that prepares for the chace; and the moving of warriors from the hall. —— But tall above the reſt is the hero of ſtreamy Atha: he bends his eye of love on Sul-malla, from his ſtately ſteps. She turns, with pride, her face away, and careleſs bends the bow.

Such

*) The diſcovery which ſucceeds this circumſtance, is well imagined, and naturally conducted. The ſilence of Cathmor upon this occaſion is more expreſſive of the emotions of his ſoul, than any ſpeech which the poet could put into his mouth.

Such were the dreams of the maid, when Atha's warrior came. He ſaw her fair face before him, in the midſt of her wandering locks. He knew the maid of Lumon. What ſhould Cathmor do? —— His ſigh aroſe: his tears came down. But ſtraight he turned away. —— This is no time, king of Atha, to wake thy ſecret ſoul. The battle is rolled before thee, like a troubled ſtream.

He ſtruck that warning boſs *), wherein dwelt the voice of war. Erin roſe around him, like the ſound of eagle-wings. —— Sul-malla ſtarted from ſleep, in her disordered locks. She ſeized the helmet from earth, and trembled in her place. Why ſhould they know in Erin of the daughter of Inis-huna? for ſhe re-

*) In order to underſtand this paſſage, it is neceſſary to look to the deſcription of Cathmor's ſhield, which the poet has given us in the ſeventh book. This ſhield had ſeven principal boſſes, the ſound of each of which, when ſtruck with a ſpear, conveyed a particular order from the king to his tribes. The ſound of one of them, as here, was the ſignal for the army to aſſemble.

remembered the race of kings, and the pride of her ſoul aroſe.

Her ſteps are behind a rock, by the blue-winding ſtream *) of a vale: where dwelt the dark-brown hind, ere yet the war aroſe. Thither came the voice of Cathmor, at times, to Sul-malla's ear. Her ſoul is darkly ſad; ſhe pours her words on wind.

**) The dreams of Inis-huna departed: they are rolled away from my ſoul. I hear not

*) This was not the valley of Lona, to which Sulmalla afterwards retired.

**) Of all paſſages in the works of Oſſian theſe lyric pieces loſe moſt, by a literal proſe tranſlation: as the beauty of them does not ſo much depend, on the ſtrength of thought, as on the elegance of expreſſion and harmony of numbers. It has been obſerved, that an author is put to the ſevereſt teſt, when he is ſtript of the ornaments of verſification, and delivered down in another language in proſe. Thoſe, therefore, who have ſeen how awkward a figure

not the chace in my land. I am concealed in the ſkirts of war. I look forth from my cloud; but no beam appears, to light my path. I behold my warrior low: for the broad-ſhielded king is near; he that overcomes in danger; Fingal of the ſpears. —— Spirit of departed Conmor, are thy ſteps on the boſom of winds? Comeſt thou, at times, to other lands, father of ſad Sul-malla? Thou doſt come, for I have heard thy voice at night; while yet I roſe on the wave to ſtreamy Inis-fail. The ghoſt of fathers, they ſay *), can ſeize the ſouls of their

even Homer and Virgil make, in a verſion of this ſort, will think the better of the compoſitions of Oſſian.

*) Con-mor, the father of Sul-malla, was killed in that war, from which Cathmor delivered Inis-huna. Larmar his ſon ſucceeded Conmor. It was the opinion of the times, when a perſon was reduced to a pitch of miſery, which could admit of no alleviation, that the ghoſts of his anceſtors *called his ſoul away*. This ſupernatural kind of death was called *the voice of the dead*; and is believed by the ſuperſtitious vulgar to this day.

There

their race, while they behold them lonely in the midſt of woe. Call me, my father, when the

There is no people in the world, perhaps, who gave more univerſal credit to apparitions, and the viſits of the ghoſts of the deceaſed to their friends, than the common highlanders. This is to be attributed as much, at leaſt, to the ſituation of the country they poſſeſs, as to that credulous diſpoſition which diſtinguiſhes an unenlightened people. As their buſineſs was feeding of cattle, in dark and extenſive deſarts, ſo their journeys lay over wide and unfrequented heaths, where, often, they were obliged to ſleep in the open air, amidſt the whiſtling of winds, and roar of waterfalls. The gloomineſs of the ſcenes around them was apt to beget that melancholy diſpoſition of mind, which moſt readily receives impreſſions of the extraordinary and ſupernatural kind. Falling aſleep in this gloomy mood, and their dreams being diſturbed by the noiſe of the elements around, it is no matter of wonder, that they thought they heard the *voice of the dead*. This *voice of the dead*, however, was, perhaps, no more than a ſhriller whiſtle of the winds in an old tree, or in the chinks of a neighbouring rock. It is to this cauſe I aſcribe thoſe many and improbable tales

the king is low on earth; for then I ſhall be lonely in the midſt of woe.

of ghoſts, which we meet with in the highlands: for, in other reſpects, we do not find that the highlanders are more credulous than their neighbours.

TEMO-

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK FIFTH.

ARGUMENT TO BOOK V.

Oſſian, after a ſhort addreſs to the harp of Cona, deſcribes the arrangement of both armies on either ſide of the river Lubar. Fingal gives the command to Fillan: but, at the ſame time, orders Gaul, the ſon of Morni, who had been wounded in the hand in the preceding battle, to aſſiſt him with his counſel. The army of the Fir-bolg is commanded by Foldath. The general onſet is deſcribed. The great actions of Fillan. He kills Rothmar and Culmin. But when Fillan conquers, in one wing, Foldath preſſes hard on the other. He wounds Dermid, the ſon of Duthno, and puts the whole wing to flight. Dermid deliberates with himſelf, and, at laſt, reſolves to put a ſtop to the progreſs of Foldath, by engaging him in ſingle combat. —— When the two chiefs were approaching towards one another, Fillan came ſuddenly to the relief of Dermid; engaged Foldath, and killed him. The behaviour of Malthos towards the fallen Foldath. Fillan puts the whole army of the Fir-bolg to flight. The book cloſes with an addreſs to Clatho, the mother of that hero.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK FIFTH.

*) Thou dweller between the ſhields, that hang on high in Oſſian's hall! deſcend from thy place, o harp, and let me hear thy

*) Theſe abrupt addreſſes give great life to the poetry of Oſſian. They are all in a lyric meaſure. The old men, who retain, on memory, the compoſitions of Oſſian, ſhew much ſatisfaction, when they come to thoſe parts of them, which are in rhime, and take great pains to explain their beauties, and inculcate the meaning of their obſolete phraſes, on the minds of their hearers. This attachment does not proceed from the ſuperior beauty of theſe lyric pieces, but ra-

thy voice. —— Son of Alpin, ſtrike the ſtring; thou muſt awake the ſoul of the bard. The mur-

rather from a taſte for rhime, which the modern bards have eſtabliſhed among the highlanders. Having no genius themſelves for the ſublime and pathetic, they placed the whole beauty of poetry in the returning harmony of ſimilar ſounds. The ſeducing charms of rhime ſoon weaned their countrymen from that attachment, they long had to the recitative of Oſſian: and, tho' they ſtill admired his compoſitions, their admiration was founded more on his antiquity, and the detail of facts which he gave, than on his poetical excellence. Rhiming, in proceſs of time, became ſo much reduced into a ſyſtem, and was ſo univerſally underſtood, that every cow-herd compoſed tolerable verſes. Theſe poems, it is true, were a deſcription of nature; but of nature in its rudeſt form; a group of unintereſting ideas dreſſed out in the flowing harmony of monotonous verſes. Void of merit as thoſe vulgar compoſitions were, they fell little ſhort of the productions of the regular bards: for when all poetical excellence is confined to ſounds alone, it is within the power of every one poſſeſſed of a good ear.

murmur of Lora's *) ſtream has rolled the tale away. —— I ſtand in the cloud of years: few are its openings towards the paſt, and when the viſion comes, it is but dim and dark. — I hear thee, harp of Cona; my ſoul returns, like a breeze, which the ſun brings back to the vale, where dwelt the lazy miſt.

**) Lubar is bright before me, in the windings of its vale. On either ſide, on their hills, riſe

*) Lora is often mentioned; it was a ſmall and rapid ſtream in the neighbourhood of Selma. There is no veſtige of this name now remaining; tho' it appears from a very old ſong, which the translator has ſeen, that one of the ſmall rivers on the north-weſt coaſt was called Lora ſome centuries ago.

**) From ſeveral paſſages in the poem we may form a diſtinct idea of the ſcene of the action of Temora. At a ſmall diſtance from one another roſe the hills of Mora and Lona: the firſt poſſeſſed by Fingal, the ſecond by the army of Cathmor. Through the intermediate plain ran the ſmall river Lubar, on the banks of which all the battles were fought, excepting that between Cairbar and Oſcar, related in the firſt book. This laſt mentioned engagement happened, to the

riſe the tall forms of the kings: their people are poured around them, bending forward to their words; as if their fathers ſpoke, deſcending from their winds. —— But the kings were like two rocks in the midſt, each with its dark head of pines, when they are ſeen in the deſart, above low-ſailing miſt. High on their face are ſtreams, which ſpread their foam on blaſts.

Beneath the voice of Cathmor poured Erin, like the ſound of flame. Wide they came down to Lubar; before them is the ſtride of Foldath. But Cathmor retired to his hill, beneath his bending oaks. The tumbling of a ſtream is near the king: he lifts, at times, his gleaming ſpear.

the north of the hill of Mora, of which Fingal took poſſeſſion, after the army of Cairbar fell back to that of Cathmor. At ſome diſtance, but within ſight of Mora, towards the weſt, Lubar iſſued from the mountain of Crommal; and after a ſhort courſe thro' the plain of Moi-lena, diſcharged itſelf into the ſea near the field of battle. Behind the mountain of Crommal ran the ſmall ſtream of Levath, on the banks of which Ferad-artho, the ſon of Cairbre, the only perſon remaining of the race of Conar, lived concealed in a cave, during the uſurpation of Cairbar, the ſon of Borbar-duthul.

ſpear. It was a flame to his people, in the midſt of war. Near him ſtood the daughter of Con-mor, leaning on her rock. She did not rejoice over the ſtrife: her ſoul delighted not in blood. A valley *) ſpreads green behind the hill, with its three blue ſtreams. The ſun is there in ſilence; and the dun mountain-roes come down. On theſe are turned the eyes of Inis-huna's white-boſomed maid.

Fingal beheld, on high, the ſon of Borbarduthul: he ſaw the deep-rolling of Erin, on the darkened plain. He ſtruck that warning boſs, which bids the people obey; when he ſends his chiefs before them, to the field of renown. Wide roſe their ſpears to the ſun; their ecchoing ſhields reply around. —— Fear, like a vapor, did not wind among the hoſt: for he, the king, was near, the ſtrength of ſtreamy Morven. —— Gladneſs brightened the hero, we heard his words of joy.

Like

*) It was to this valley Sul-malla retired, during the laſt and deciſive battle between Fingal and Cathmor. It is deſcribed in the ſeventh book, where it is called the vale of Lona, and the reſidence of a Druid.

Like the coming forth of winds, is the ſound of Morven's ſons! They are mountain-waters, determined in their courſe. Hence is Fingal renowned, and his name in other lands. He was not a lonely beam in danger; for your ſteps were always near. —— But never was I a dreadful form, in your preſence, darkened into wrath. My voice was no thunder to your ears: mine eyes ſent forth no death. — When the haughty appeared, I beheld them not. They were forgot at my feaſts: like miſt they melted away. —— A young beam is before you: few are his paths to war. They are few, but he is valiant: defend my dark-haired ſon. Bring him back with joy: Hereafter he may ſtand alone. His form is like his fathers: his ſoul is a flame of their fire. —— Son of car-borne Morni, move behind the ſon of Clatho: let thy voice reach his ear, from the ſkirts of war. Not unobſerved rolls battle, before thee, breaker of the ſhields.

The king ſtrode, at once, away to Cormul's *) lofty rock. As, ſlow, I lifted my ſteps

*) The rock of Cormul roſe on the hill of Mora, and commanded a proſpect of the field of battle. The ſpeech of Fingal, which immediately preceded

es

ſteps behind; came forward the ſtrength of Gaul. His ſhield hung looſe on its thong; he ſpoke, in haſte, to Oſſian. —— Bind *), ſon of Fingal, this ſhield, bind it high to the ſide of Gaul. The foe may behold it, and think I left the ſpear. If I ſhall fall, let my tomb be hid in the field: for fall I muſt without my fame: mine arm cannot lift the ſteel. Let not Evir-choma hear it, to bluſh between her locks. —— Fillan, the mighty behold us; let us not forget the ſtrife. Why ſhould they come, from their hills, to aid our flying field?

He ſtrode onward, with the ſound of his ſhield. My voice purſued him, as he went. Can

es this paſſage, is worthy of being remarked, as the language, not only of a warlike, but a good king. The confidence which his people repoſed in him, was as much the reſult of his clemency and military merit, as the conſequence of that affection, which men, uncorrupted with the vices of advanced ſociety, naturally have for the chief of their blood and hereditary prince.

*) It is neceſſary to remember, that Gaul was wounded; which occaſions his requiring here the aſſiſtance of Oſſian to bind his ſhield on his ſide.

Can the ſon of Morni fall without his fame in Erin? But the deeds of the mighty forſake their ſouls of fire. They ruſh careleſs over the fields of renown: their words are never heard. —— I rejoiced over the ſteps of the chief: I ſtrode to the rock of the king, where he ſat in his wandering locks, amidſt the mountain-wind.

In two dark ridges bend the hoſts, towards each other, at Lubar. Here Foldath roſe a pillar of darkneſs: there brightened the youth of Fillan. Each, with his ſpear in the ſtream, ſent forth the voice of war. —— Gaul ſtruck the ſhield of Morven: at once they plunge in battle. —— Steel poured its gleam on ſteel: like the fall of ſtreams ſhone the field, when they mix their foam together, from two dark-browed rocks. —— Behold he comes the ſon of fame: he lays the people low! Deaths ſit on blaſts around him! —— Warriors ſtrew thy paths, o Fillan!

*) Rothmar, the ſhield of warriors, ſtood between two chinky rocks. Two oaks, which winds

*) Roth-mar, *the ſound of the ſea before a ſtorm.* Drumanard, *high ridge.* Culmin, *ſoft-haired.* Cull-allin, *beautiful locks.* Strutha, *ſtreamy river.*

winds had bent from high, ſpread their branches on either ſide. He rolls his darkening eyes on Fillan, and ſilent, ſhades his friends. Fingal ſaw the approaching fight; and all his ſoul aroſe. —— But as the ſtone of Loda *) falls,

*) By the ſtone of Loda, as I have remarked in my notes on ſome other poems of Oſſian, is meant a place of worſhip among the Scandinavians. Oſſian, in his many expeditions to Orkney and Scandinavia, became acquainted with ſome of the rites of the religion which prevailed in thoſe countries, and frequently alludes to them in his poems. There are ſome ruins, and circular pales of ſtone, remaining ſtill in Orkney, and the iſlands of Shetland, which retain, to this day, the name of *Loda* or *Loden*. They ſeem to have differed materially, in their conſtruction, from thoſe Druidical monuments, which remain in Britain, and the weſtern iſles. The places of worſhip among the Scandinavians were originally rude and unadorned. In after ages, when they opened a communication with other nations, they adopted their manners, and built temples. That at Upſal, in Sweden, was amazingly rich and magnificent. Haquin, of Norway, built one, near Drontheim, little inferior to the former; and it went always under the

falls, ſhook, at once, from rocking Drumanard, when ſpirits heave the earth in their wrath; ſo fell blue-ſhielded Rothmar.

Near are the ſteps of Culmin; the youth came, burſting into tears. Wrathful he cut the wind, ere yet he mixed his ſtrokes with Fillan. He had firſt bent the bow with Rothmar, at the rock of his own blue ſtreams. There they had marked the place of the roe, as the ſun-beam flew over the fern. —— Why, ſon of Cul-allin, doſt thou ruſh on that beam *) of light? it is a fire that conſumes. —— Youth of Strutha retire. Your fathers

name of Loden. *Mallet, introduction à l'hiſtoire de Dannemarc.*

*) The poet, metaphorically, calls Fillan a beam of light. Culmin, mentioned here, was the ſon of Clonmar, chief of Strutha, by the beautiful Cul-allin. She was ſo remarkable for the beauty of her perſon, that ſhe is introduced, frequently, in the ſimilies and alluſions of antient poetry. *Mar Chul-alain Strutha nan ſian;* is a line of Oſſian in another poem; *i. e. Lovely as Cul-allin of Strutha of the ſtorms.*

fathers were not equal, in the glittering ſtrife of the field.

The mother of Culmin remains in the hall; ſhe looks forth on blue-rolling Strutha. A whirlwind riſes, on the ſtream, dark-eddying round the ghoſt of her ſon. His dogs *) are howling in their place: his ſhield is bloody in the hall. —— "Art thou fallen, my fair-haired ſon, in Erin's dismal war?"

As

*) Dogs were thought to be ſenſible of the death of their maſter, let it happen at ever ſo great a diſtance. It was alſo the opinion of the times, that the arms which warriors left at home became bloody, when they themſelves fell in battle. It was from thoſe ſigns that Cul-allin is ſuppoſed to underſtand, that her ſon is killed; in which ſhe is confirmed by the appearence of his ghoſt. —— Her ſudden and ſhort exclamation, on the occaſion, is more affecting, than if ſhe had extended her complaints to a greater length. The attitude of the fallen youth, and Fillan's reflexions over him, are natural and judicious, and come forcibly back on the mind, when we conſider, that the ſuppoſed ſituation of the father of Culmin, was ſo ſimilar to that of Fingal, after the death of Fillan himſelf.

As a roe, pierced in ſecret, lies panting, by her wonted ſtreams; the hunter looks over her feet of wind, and remembers her ſtately bounding before: ſo lay the ſon of Cul-allin, beneath the eye of Fillan. His hair is rolled in a little ſtream: his blood wandered on his ſhield. Still his hand held the ſword, that failed him in the day of his danger. —— "Thou art fallen, ſaid Fillan, ere yet thy fame was heard. —— Thy father ſent thee to war: and he exſpects to hear thy deeds. He is grey, perhaps, at his ſtreams, turning his dim eyes towards Moi-lena. But thou ſhalt not return, with the ſpoil of the fallen foe."

Fillan poured the flight of Erin before him, over the ecchoing heath. —— But, man on man, fell Morven before the dark-red rage of Foldath: for, far on the field, he poured the roar of half his tribes. Dermid *) ſtood before him in wrath: the ſons of Cona gather round. But his ſhield is cleft by Foldath, and his people poured over the heath.

Then

*) This Dermid is, probably, the ſame with *Dermid O duine*, who makes ſo great a figure in the fictions of the Iriſh bards.

Then ſaid the foe, in his pride, They have fled, and my fame begins. Go, Malthos, and bid the king *) to guard the dark-rolling of ocean; that Fingal may not eſcape from my ſword. He muſt lie on earth. Beſide ſome fen ſhall his tomb be ſeen. It ſhall riſe without a ſong. His ghoſt ſhall hover in miſt over the reedy pool.

Malthos heard with darkening doubt; he rolled his ſilent eyes. —— He knew the pride of Foldath, and looked up to the king on his hill; then, darkly turning, he plunged his ſword in war.

In Clono's **) narrow vale, were bent two trees above the ſtreams; dark in his grief ſtood

*) Cathmor.

**) This valley had its name from Clono, ſon of Lethmal of Lora, one of the anceſtors of Dermid, the ſon of Duthno. His hiſtory is thus related in an old poem. In the days of Conar, the ſon of Trenmor, the firſt king of Ireland, Clono paſſed over into that kingdom, from Caledonia, to aid Conar againſt the Fir-bolg. Being remarkable for the beauty of his perſon,

ſtood Duthno's ſilent ſon. The blood poured from his thigh: his ſhield lay broken near. His ſpear leaned againſt a ſtone. Why, Dermid, why ſo ſad?

I hear

he ſoon drew the attention of Sulmin, the young wife of an Iriſh chief. She diſcloſed her paſſion, which was not properly returned by the Caledonian. The lady ſickened, thro' diſappointment, and her love for Clono came to the ears of her husband. Fired with jealouſy, he vowed revenge. Clono, to avoid his rage, departed from Temora, in order to paſs over into Scotland; and being benighted in the valley mentioned here, he laid himſelf down to ſleep. *There*, (to uſe the words of the poet) *Lethmal deſcended in the dreams of Clono; and told him, that danger was near.* For the reader's amuſement I ſhall translate the viſion, which does not want poetical merit.

Ghoſt of Lethmal.

"Ariſe from thy bed of moſs; ſon of low-laid Lethmal, ariſe. The ſound of the coming of foes deſcends along the wind.

Clono.

Whoſe voice is that, like many ſtreams, in the ſeaſon of my reſt?

Ghoſt

I hear the roar of battle. My people are alone. My ſteps are ſlow on the heath; and no ſhield is mine. —— Shall he then prevail? It

Ghoſt of LETHMAL.

Ariſe, thou dweller of the ſouls of the lovely; ſon of Lethmal, ariſe.

CLONO.

How dreary is the night! The moon is darkened in the ſky; red are the paths of ghoſts, along its ſullen face! Green-ſkirted meteors ſet around. Dull is the roaring of ſtreams, from the valley of dim forms. I hear thee, ſpirit of my father, on the eddying courſe of the wind. I hear thee, but thou bendeſt not, forward, thy tall form, from the ſkirts of night.

As Clono prepared to depart, the husband of Sulmin came up, with his numerous attendants. Clono defended himſelf, but, after a gallant reſiſtance, he was overpowered and ſlain. He was burried in the place where he was killed, and the valley was called after his name. Dermid, in his requeſt to Gaul the ſon of Morni, which immediately follows this paragraph, alludes to the tomb of Clono, and his own connection with that unfortunate chief.

—— It is then after Dermid is low! I will call thee forth, o Foldath, and meet thee yet in fight.

He took his ſpear, with dreadful joy. The ſon of Morni came. —— "Stay, ſon of Duthno, ſtay thy ſpeed; thy ſteps are marked with blood. No boſſy ſhield is thine. Why ſhouldſt thou fall unarmed?" —— King of Strumon, give thou thy ſhield. It has often rolled back the war. I ſhall ſtop the chief, in his courſe. —— Son of Morni, doſt thou behold that ſtone? It lifts its grey head thro' graſs. There dwells a chief of the race of Dermid. —— Place me there in night *).

He

*) The brevity of the ſpeech of Gaul, and the laconic reply of Dermid, are judicious and well ſuited to the hurry of the occaſion. The incidents which Oſſian has choſen to diverſify his battles, are intereſting, and never fail to awaken our attention. I know, that want of particularity in the wounds, and diverſity in the fall of thoſe that are ſlain, have been among the objections, ſtarted, to the poetical merit of Oſſian's poems. The criticiſm, without partiality I may

He ſlowly roſe againſt the hill, and ſaw the troubled field. The gleaming ridges of the fight, disjoined and broken round. —— As diſtant fires, on heath by night, now ſeem as loſt in ſmoak, then rearing their red ſtreams on the hill, as blow or ceaſe the winds: ſo met the intermitting war the eye of broad-ſhielded Dermid. —— Thro' the hoſt are the ſtrides of Foldath; like ſome dark ſhip on wintry waves, when it iſſues from between two iſles, to ſport on ecchoing ſeas.

Dermid,

I may ſay it, is unjuſt: for our poet has introduced as great a variety of this ſort, as he, with propriety, could within the compaſs of ſo ſhort poems. It is confeſſed, that Homer has a greater variety of deaths, than any other poet that ever appeared. His great knowledge in anatomy can never be disputed: but, I am far from thinking, that his battles, even with all their novelty of wounds, are the moſt beautiful parts of his poems. The human mind dwells with disguſt upon a protracted ſcene of carnage; and, tho' the introduction of the terrible is neceſſary to the grandeur of heroic poetry, yet I am convinced, that a medium ought to be obſerved.

Dermid, with rage, beheld his courſe. He ſtrove to ruſh along. But he failed in the midſt of his ſteps; and the big tear came down. — He ſounded his father's horn; and thrice ſtruck his boſſy ſhield. He called thrice the name of Foldath, from his roaring tribes. —— Foldath, with joy, beheld the chief: he lifted high his bloody ſpear. —— As a rock is marked with ſtreams, that fell troubled down its ſide in a ſtorm: ſo, ſtreaked with wandering blood, is the dark form of Moma.

The hoſt, on either ſide, withdrew from the contending of kings. —— They raiſed, at once, their gleaming points. —— Ruſhing came Fillan of Moruth *). Three paces back Fol-

*) The rapidity of this verſe, which indeed is but faintly imitated in the translation, is amazingly expreſſive in the original. One hears the very rattling of the armour of Fillan. The intervention of Fillan is neceſſary here: for as Dermid was wounded before, it is not to be ſuppoſed, he could be a match for Foldath. Fillan is often, poetically, called the *ſon of Moruth*, from a ſtream of that name in Morven, near which he was born.

Foldath withdrew; dazzled with that beam of light, which came, as iſuing from a cloud, to ſave the wounded hero. —— Growing in his pride he ſtood, and called forth all his ſteel.

As meet two broad-winged eagles, in their ſounding ſtrife, on the winds: ſo ruſhed the two chiefs, on Moi-lena, into gloomy fight. —— By turns are the ſteps of the kings *) forward on their rocks; for now the duſky war ſeems to deſcend on their ſwords. —— Cathmor feels the joy of warriors, on his moſſy hill: their joy in ſecret, when dangers riſe equal to their ſouls. His eye is not turned on Lubar, but on Morven's dreadful king; for he beheld him, on Mora, riſing in his arms.

Foldath **) fell on his ſhield; the ſpear of Fillan pierced the king. Nor looked the youth

*) Fingal and Cathmor.

**) The fall of Foldath, if we may believe tradition, was predicted to him, before he had left his own country, to join Cairbar, in his deſigns on the Iriſh throne. He went to the cave of Moma, to enquire of the ſpirits of his fathers, concerning the ſucceſs of the enterpriſe of Cairbar.

youth on the fallen, but onward rolled the war. The hundred voices of death aroſe. —— "Stay, ſon of Fingal, ſtay thy ſpeed. Beholdeſt

bar. The reſponſes of oracles are always attended with obſcurity, and liable to a double meaning: Foldath, therefore, put a favourable interpretation on the prediction, and purſued his adopted plan of aggrandizing himſelf with the family of Atha. I ſhall, here, translate the anſwer of *the ghoſts of his anceſtors*, as it was handed down by tradition. Whether the legend is really ancient, or the invention of a late age, I ſhall not pretend, to determine; tho', from the phraſeology, I ſhould the laſt.

FOLDATH, *addreſſing the ſpirits of his fathers.*

Dark, I ſtand in your preſence; fathers of Foldath, hear. Shall my ſteps paſs over Atha, to Ullin of the roes?

The Anſwer.

Thy ſteps ſhall paſs over Atha, to the green dwelling of kings. There ſhall thy ſtature ariſe, over the fallen, like a pillar of thunder-clouds. There, terrible in darkneſs, ſhalt thou ſtand, till the *reflected beam*, or *Clon-cath* of Moruth, come; Moruth of many ſtreams, that roars in diſtant lands."

eſt thou not that gleaming form, a dreadful ſign of death? Awaken not the king of Alnecma. Return, ſon of blue-eyed Clatho."

Malthos *) ſaw Foldath low. He darkly ſtood above the king. Hatred was rolled from his

Cloncath, or *reflected beam*, ſay my traditional authors, was the name of the ſword of Fillan; ſo that it was, in the latent ſignification of the word *Clon-cath*, that the deception lay. My principal reaſon for introducing this note, is, that, if this tradition is equally ancient with the poem, which, by the bye, is doubtful, it ſerves to ſhew, that the religion of the Fir-bolg differed from that of the Caledonians, as we never find the latter enquiring of the ſpirits of their deceaſed anceſtors.

*) The characters of Foldath and Malthos are well ſuſtained. They were both dark and ſurly, but each in a different way. Foldath was impetuous and cruel; Malthos ſtubborn and incredulous. Their attachment to the family of Atha was equal; their bravery in battle the ſame. Foldath was vain and oſtentatious: Malthos unindulgent, but generous. His behaviour here, towards his

his ſoul. He ſeemed a rock in the deſart, on whoſe dark ſide are the trickling of waters, when the ſlow-ſailing miſt has left it, and its trees are blaſted with winds. He ſpoke to the dying hero, about the narrow houſe. Whether ſhall thy grey ſtone riſe in Ullin? or in Moma's *) woody land, where the ſun looks, in ſecret, on the blue ſtreams of Dalrutho **)? There are the ſteps of thy daughter, blue-eyed Dardu-lena.

Remem-

enemy Foldath, ſhews, that a good heart often lies concealed under a gloomy and ſullen character.

*) Moma was the name of a country in the ſouth of Connaught, once famous for being the reſidence of an Arch-druid. The cave of Moma was thought to be inhabited by the ſpirits of the chiefs of the Fir-bolg, and their poſterity ſent to enquire there, as to an oracle, concerning the iſſue of their wars.

**) Dal-ruäth, *parched or ſandy field.* The etymology of Dardu-lena is uncertain. The daughter of Foldath was, probably, ſo called, from a place in Ulſter, where her father had defeated part of the adherents of Artho, king of Ireland.

Dor-

Remembereſt thou her, ſaid Foldath, becauſe no ſon is mine; no youth to roll the battle before him, in revenge of me? Malthos, I am revenged. I was not peaceful in the field. Raiſe the tombs of thoſe I have ſlain, around my narrow houſe. Often ſhall I forſake the blaſt, to rejoice above their graves; when I behold them ſpread around, with their long-whiſtling graſs.

His ſoul ruſhed to the vales of Moma, and came to Dardu-lena's dreams, where ſhe ſlept, by Dalrutho's ſtream, returning from the chace of the hinds. Her bow is near the maid, unſtrung; the breezes fold her long hair on her breaſts. Cloathed in the beauty of youth, the love of heroes lay. Dark bending, from the ſkirts of the wood, her wounded father came. He appeared, at times, then ſeemed as hid in miſt. —— Burſting into tears ſhe roſe: ſhe knew that the chief was low. To her came

Dor-du-lena; *the dark wood of Moi-lena.* As Foldath was proud and oſtentatious, it would appear, that he tranſferred the name of a place, where he himſelf had been victorious, to his daughter.

came a beam from his ſoul, when folded in its ſtorms. Thou wert the laſt of his race, blue-eyed Dardu-lena!

Wide-ſpreading over ecchoing Lubar, the flight of Bolga is rolled along. Fillan hung forward on their ſteps; and ſtrewed, with dead, the heath. Fingal rejoiced over his ſon. —— Blue-ſhielded Cathmor roſe. ——*). Son of Alpin, bring the harp: give Fillan's praiſe to the

*) Theſe ſudden transitions from the ſubject are not uncommon in the compoſitions of Oſſian. That in this place has a peculiar beauty and propriety. The ſuſpence, in which the mind of the reader is left, conveys the idea of Fillan's danger more forcibly home, than any deſcription the poet could introduce. There is a ſort of eloquence, in ſilence with propriety. A minute detail of the circumſtances of an important ſcene is generally cold and inſipid. The human mind, free and fond of thinking for itſelf, is diſguſted to find every thing done by the poet. It is, therefore, his buſineſs only to mark the moſt ſtriking out-lines, and to allow the imaginations of his readers to finiſh the figure for themſelves.

The

the wind: raiſe high his praiſe, in my hall, while yet he ſhines in war.

Leave, blue-eyed Clatho, leave thy hall. Behold that early beam of thine. The hoſt is withered in its courſe. No further look — it is dark. —— Light-trembling from the harp, ſtrike, virgins, ſtrike the ſound. —— No hunter he deſcends, from the dewy haunt of the bounding roe. He bends not his bow on the wind; or ſends his grey arrow abroad.

Deep-folded in red war, the battle rolls againſt his ſide. Or, ſtriding midſt the ridgy ſtrife, he pours the deaths of thouſands forth. Fillan is like a ſpirit of heaven, that deſcends from

The addreſs to Clatho, the mother of Fillan, which concludes this book, if we regard the verſification of the original, is one of the moſt beautiful paſſages in the poem. The wild ſimplicity and harmony of its cadences are inimitably beautiful. It is ſung ſtill by many in the north, and is diſtinguiſhed by the name of *Laoi chaon Chlatho*: i. e. *The harmonious hymn of Clatho*. The book ends in the afternoon of the third day, from the opening of the poem.

from the ſkirt of his blaſt. The troubled ocean feels his ſteps, as he ſtrides from wave to wave. His path kindles behind him; iſlands ſhake their heads on the heaving ſeas.

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TEMO-

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK SIXTH.

TYRTÆA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ARGUMENT TO BOOK VI.

This book opens with a ſpeech of Fingal, who ſees Cathmor deſcending to the aſſiſtance of his flying army. The king diſpatches Oſſian to the relief of Fillan. He himſelf retires behind the rock of Cormul, to avoid the ſight of the engagement between his ſon and Cathmor. Oſſian advances. The deſcent of Cathmor deſcribed. He rallies the army, renews the battle, and, before Oſſian could arrive, engages Fillan himſelf. Upon the approach of Oſſian, the combar between the two heroes ceaſes. Oſſian and Cathmor prepare to fight, but night coming on prevents them. Oſſian returns to the place where Cathmor and Fillan fought. He finds Fillan mortally wounded, and leaning againſt a rock. Their diſcourſe. Fillan dies: his body is laid, by Oſſian, in a neighbouring cave. —— The Caledonian army return to Fingal. He queſtions them about his ſon, and underſtanding that he was killed, retires, in ſilence, to the rock of Cormul. —— Upon the retreat of the army of Fingal, the Fir-bolg advance,

ARGUMENT to Book VI.

Cathmor finds Bran, one of the dogs of Fingal, lying on the shield of Fillan, before the entrance of the cave, where the body of that hero lay. His reflexions thereupon. He returns, in a melancholy mood, to his army. Malthos endeavours to comfort him, by the example of his father Borbar-duthul. Cathmor retires to rest. The song of Sul-malla concludes the book, which ends about the middle of the third night, from the opening of the poem.

TEMO-

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK SIXTH.

*) Cathmor riſes on his ecchoing hill! Shall Fingal take the ſword of Luno? But what ſhould become of thy fame, ſon of white-boſom-

*) I have, in a preceding note, obſerved that the abrupt manner of Oſſian partakes much of the nature of the Drama. The opening of this book is a confirmation of the juſtneſs of this obſervation. Inſtead of a long detail of circumſtances delivered by the poet himſelf, about the deſcent of Cathmor from the hill, whereon he ſat to behold the battle, he puts the narration in the mouth of Fingal. The relation acquires importance from the character of the ſpeaker. The concern which Fingal ſhews, when he beholds

boſomed Cletho? Turn not thine eyes from Fingal, daughter of Inistore. I ſhall not quench thy early beam; it ſhines along my ſoul,

holds the *riſing of Cathmor*, raiſes our ideas of the valour of that hero to the higheſt pitch. The apoſtrophes which are crowded on one another, are expreſſive of the perturbation of Fingal's ſoul, and of his fear for his ſon, who was not a match for the king of Ireland. The conduct of the poet in removing Fingal from the ſight of the engagement, is very judicious; for the king might be induced, from ſeeing the inequality of the combat between Fillan and Cathmor, to come to battle himſelf, and ſo bring about the cataſtrophe of the poem prematurely. The removal of Fingal affords room to the poet for introducing thoſe affecting ſcenes, which immediately ſucceed, and are among the chief beauties of the poem. —— They who can deny art to Oſſian, in conducting the cataſtrophe of Temora, are certainly more prejudiced againſt the age he lived in, than is conſiſtent with good ſenſe. I cannot finiſh this note, without obſerving the delicacy and propriety of Fingal's addreſs to Oſſian. By the appellation of the *father of Oſcar*, he raiſes at once, in the mind of the hero, all that tenderneſs for the ſafety of Fillan, which a ſituation ſo ſimilar to that of his own ſon, when he fell, was capable to ſuggeſt.

ſoul. —— But riſe, o wood-ſkirted Mora, riſe, between the war and me! Why ſhould Fingal behold the ſtrife, leſt his dark-haired warrior ſhould fall! —— Amidſt the ſong, o Carril, pour the ſound of the trembling harp: here are the voices of rocks, and bright tumbling of waters. Father of Oſcar, lift the ſpear; defend the young in arms. Conceal thy ſteps from Fillan's eyes. —— He muſt not know, that I doubt his ſteel. —— No cloud of mine ſhall riſe, my ſon, upon thy ſoul of fire!

He ſunk behind his rock, amidſt the ſound of Carril's ſong. —— Brightening, in my growing ſoul, I took the ſpear of Temora *). I ſaw, along Moi-lena, the wild tumbling of

*) The *ſpear of Temora* was that, which Oſcar had received, in a preſent, from Cormac, the ſon of Artho, king of Ireland. It was of it that Cairbar made the pretext, for quarrelling with Oſcar, at the feaſt, in the firſt book. After the death of Oſcar we find it always in the hands of Oſſian. It is ſaid, in another poem, that it was preſerved, as a reliqué, at Temora, from the days of Conar, the ſon of Trenmor, the firſt king of Ireland.

of battle, the ſtrife of death, in gleaming rows, disjoined, and broken round. Fillan is a beam of fire: from wing to wing is his waſteful courſe. The ridges of war melt before him. They are rolled, in ſmoak, from the fields.

*) Now is the coming forth of Cathmor, in the armour of kings! Dark-rolled the eagle's wing above his helmet of fire. Unconcerned are his ſteps, as if they were to the chace of

*) The appearance of Cathmor is magnificent: his unconcerned gait, and the effect which his very voice has upon his flying army, are circumſtances calculated to raiſe our ideas of his ſuperior merit and valour. Oſſian is very impartial with regard to his enemies: this, however, cannot be ſaid of other poets of great eminence and unqueſtioned merit. Milton, of the firſt claſs of poets, is undoubtedly the moſt irreprehenſible in this reſpect; for we always pity or admire his Devil, but ſeldom deteſt him, even tho' he is the arch-enemy of our ſpecies. Mankind generally take ſides with the unfortunate and daring. It is from this diſpoſition that many readers, tho' otherwiſe good chriſtians, have almoſt wiſhed ſucceſs to Satan, in his deſperate and daring voyage from hell, through the regions of chaos and night.

of Atha. He raiſed, at times, his dreadful voice; Erin, abaſhed, gathered round. —— Their ſouls returned back, like a ſtream: they wondered at the ſteps of their fear: for he roſe, like the beam of the morning on a haunted heath: the traveller looks back, with bending eye, on the field of dreadful forms.

Sudden, from the rock of Moi-lena, are Sul-malla's trembling ſteps. An oak took the ſpear from her hand; half-bent ſhe looſed the lance: but then are her eyes on the king, from amidſt her wandering locks. —— No friendly ſtriſe is before thee: no light contending of bows, as when the youth of Cluba *) came forth beneath the eye of Conmor.

As the rock of Runo, which takes the paſſing clouds for its robe, ſeems growing, in gathered darkneſs, over the ſtreamy heath: ſo ſeem-

*) Clu-ba, *winding bay;* an arm of the ſea in Iniſhuna, or the weſtern coaſt of South-Britain. It was in this bay that Cathmor was wind-bound, when Sul-malla came, in the diſguiſe of a young warrior, to accompany him in his voyage to Ireland. Conmor, the father of Sul-malla, as we learn from her ſoliloquy, at the cloſe of the fourth book, was dead before the departure of his daughter.

ſeemed the chief of Atha taller, as gathered his people round. —— As different blaſts fly over the ſea, each behind its dark-blue wave, ſo Cathmor's words, on every ſide, poured his warriors forth. —— Nor ſilent on his hill is Fillan; he mixed his words with his ecchoing ſhield. An eagle he ſeemed, with ſounding wings, calling the wind to his rock, when he ſees the coming forth of the roes, on Lutha's*) ruſhy field.

Now they bent forward in battle: death's hundred voices roſe; for the kings, on either ſide, were like fires on the ſouls of the people. —— I bounded along: high rocks and trees ruſhed tall between the war and me. — But I heard the noiſe of ſteel, between my clanging arms. Riſing, gleaming, on the hill, I beheld the backward ſteps of hoſts: their backward ſteps, on either ſide, and wildly-looking eyes. The chiefs were met in dreadful fight; the two blue-ſhielded kings. Tall and dark,

*) Lutha was the name of a valley in Morven, in the days of Oſſian. There dwelt Toſcar the ſon of Conloch, the father of Malvina, who, upon that account, is often called *the maid of Lutha*. Lutha ſignifies *ſwift ſtream*.

dark, thro' gleams of ſteel, are ſeen the ſtriving heroes. —— I ruſhed. —— My fears for Fillan flew, burning acroſs my ſoul.

I came; nor Bathor fled; nor yet advanced: he ſidelong ſtalked along. An icy rock, cold, tall he ſeemed. I called forth all my ſteel. —— Silent a while we ſtrode, on either ſide of a ruſhing ſtream: then, ſudden turning, all at once, we raiſed our pointed ſpears. —— We raiſed our ſpears, but night came down. It is dark and ſilent around; but where the diſtant ſteps of hoſts are ſounding over the heath.

I came to the place where Fillan *) fought. Nor voice, nor ſound is there. A broken helmet lay on earth; a buckler cleft in twain. Where,

*) The ſcenery of the place where Fillan fought, and the ſituation of that hero, are picturesque and affecting. The diſtreſs, which ſucceeds, is heightened by Oſſian's being ignorant, for ſome time, that his brother was wounded. This kind of ſuſpence is frequent in Oſſian's poems. The more unexſpected a thing is, the greater impreſſion it makes on the mind, when it comes.

Where, Fillan, where art thou, young chief of ecchoing Morven? He heard me leaning againſt a rock, which bent its grey head over the ſtream. He heard, but ſullen, dark he ſtood. At length I ſaw the chief.

Why ſtandeſt thou, robed in darkneſs, ſon of woody Selma? Bright is thy path, my brother, in this dark-brown field. Long has been thy ſtrife in battle. Now the horn of Fingal is heard. Aſcend to the cloud of thy father, to his hill of feaſts. In the evening-miſt he ſits, and hears the voice of Carril's harp. Carry joy to the aged, young breaker of the ſhields.

Can the vanquiſhed carry joy? Oſſian: no ſhield is mine. It lies broken on the field. The eagle-wing of my helmet is torn. It is when foes fly before them, that fathers delight in their ſons. But their ſighs burſt forth, in ſecret, when their young warriors yield. —— No: Fillan will not behold the king. Why ſhould the hero mourn?

Son of blue-eyed Clatho, why doſt thou awake my ſoul? Wert thou not a burning fire before him; and ſhall he not rejoice? —— Such fame belonged not to Oſſian; yet was the king

king ſtill a ſun to me. He looked on my ſteps, with joy: ſhadows never roſe on his face. —— Aſcend, o Fillan, to Mora: his feaſt is ſpread in the folds of miſt.

Oſſian, give me that broken ſhield: theſe feathers that are rolled in the wind. Place them near to Fillan, that leſs of his fame may fall. Oſſian, I begin to fail. —— Lay me in that hollow rock. Raiſe no ſtone above: leſt one ſhould aſk about my fame. I am fallen in the firſt of my fields; fallen without renown. Let thy voice alone ſend joy to my flying ſoul. Why ſhould the feeble know, where dwells the loſt beam of Clatho *)?

Is

*) In this, as well as the former publication, I have only admitted into the text compleat poems, or independent epiſodes: the fragments which remain of the compoſitions of Oſſian, I have choſen to throw, occaſionally, into the notes. I ſhall here give a tranſlation of a part of a poem concerning the death of Fillan. It is a dialogue between Clatho the mother, and Bosmina the ſiſter, of that hero.

CLATHO.

"Daughter of Fingal, ariſe: thou light between thy locks. Lift thy fair head from reſt,

Is thy ſpirit on the eddying winds, blue-eyed king of ſhields? Joy purſue my hero, thro'

ſoft-gliding ſun-beam of Selma! I beheld thy arms, on thy breaſt, white-toſſed amidſt thy wandering locks: when the ruſtling breeze of the morning came from the deſart of ſtreams. Haſt thou ſeen thy fathers, Bos-mina, deſcending in thy dreams? Ariſe, daughter of Clatho; dwells there aught of grief in thy ſoul?

BOS-MINA.

A thin form paſſed before me, fading as it flew; like the darkening wave of a breeze, along a field of graſs. Deſcend, from thy wall, o harp, and call back the ſoul of Bos-mina; it has rolled away, like a ſtream. I hear thy pleaſant ſound. —— I hear thee, o harp, and my voice ſhall riſe.

How often ſhall ye ruſh to war, ye dwellers of my ſoul? Your paths are diſtant, king of men, in Erin of blue ſtreams. Lift thy wing, thou ſouthern breeze, from Clono's darkening heath: ſpread the ſails of Fingal towards the bays of his land.

But who is that, in his ſtrength, darkening in the preſence of war? His arm ſtretches to the foe, like the beam of the ſickly ſun; when his ſide

thro' his folded clouds. The forms of thy fathers, o Fillan, bend to receive their ſon. I behold the ſpreading of their fire on Mora; the blue-rolling of their miſty wreaths. —— Joy meet thee, my brother. —— But we are dark and ſide is cruſted with darkneſs; and he rolls his dismal courſe thro' the ſky. —— Who is it, but the father of Bos-mina? Shall he return till danger is paſt!

Fillan, thou art a beam by his ſide; beautiful but terrible, is thy light. Thy ſword is before thee, a blue fire of night. When ſhalt thou return to thy roes? to the ſtreams of thy ruſhy fields? When ſhall I behold thee from Mora, while winds ſtrew my long locks on moſs! —— But ſhall a young eagle return from the field, where the heroes fall!

CLATHO.

Soft, as the ſong of Loda, is the voice of Selma's maid. Pleaſant to the ear of Clatho is the name of the breaker of ſhields. —— Behold, the king comes from ocean: the ſhield of Morven is borne by bards. The foe has fled before him, like the departure of miſt. —— I hear not the ſounding wings of my eagle; the ruſhing forth of the ſon of Clatho. —— Thou art dark, o Fingal; ſhall he not return? * * * *

and ſad. I behold the foe round the aged, and the waſting away of his fame. Thou art left alone in the field, grey-haired king of Selma.

I laid him in the hollow rock, at the roar of the nightly ſtream. One red ſtar looked in on the hero: winds lift, at times, his locks. I liſtened: no ſound was heard: for the warrior ſlept. —— As lightning on a cloud, a thought came ruſhing over my ſoul. —— My eyes rolled in fire: my ſtride was in the clang of ſteel.

I will find thee, chief of Atha, in the gathering of thy thouſands. Why ſhould that cloud eſcape, that quenched our early beam? Kindle your meteors, my fathers, to light my daring ſteps. I will conſume in wrath. *) — Should

*) Here the ſentence is deſignedly left unfiniſhed by the poet. The ſenſe is, that he was reſolved, like a deſtroying fire, to conſume Cathmor, who had killed his brother. In the midſt of this reſolution, the ſituation of Fingal ſuggeſts itſelf to him, in a very ſtrong light. He reſolves to return, to aſſiſt the king in proſecuting the war. —— But then his ſhame for not defending his bro-

Should I not return! the king is without a ſon, grey-haired amidſt his foes. His arm is not as in the days of old: his fame grows dim in Erin. Let me not behold him from high, laid low in his latter field. —— But can I return to the king? Will he not aſk about his ſon? "Thou

brother, recurs to him. —— He is determined again to go and find out Cathmor. —— We may conſider him, as in the act of advancing towards the enemy, when the horn of Fingal ſounded on Mora, and called back his people to is preſence. —— This ſoliloquy is natural: the reſolutions which ſo ſuddenly follow one another, are expreſſive of a mind extremely agitated with ſorrow and conſcious ſhame: yet the behaviour of Oſſian, in his exſecution of the command of Fingal, is ſo irreprehenſible, that it is not eaſy to determine, where he failed in his duty. The truth is, that, when men fail in deſigns which they ardently wiſh to accompliſh, they naturally blame themſelves, as the chief cauſe of their diſappointment. The compariſon, with which the poet concludes his ſoliloquy, is very fancyful; and well adapted to the ideas of thoſe, who live in a country, where lightning is extremely common.

"Thou oughteſt to defend young Fillan." — I will meet the foe. —— Green Inisfail, thy ſounding tread is pleaſant to my ear: I ruſh on thy ridgy hoſt, to ſhun the eyes of Fingal. —— I hear the voice of the king, on Mora's miſty top! He calls his two ſons: I come, my father, in my grief. —— I come like an eagle, which the flame of night met in the deſart, and ſpoiled of half his wings.

*) Diſtant, round the king, on Mora, the broken ridges of Morven are rolled. They turned their eyes: each darkly bends, on his own aſhen ſpear. —— Silent ſtood the king in

*) This ſcene is ſolemn. The poet always places his chief character amidſt objects which favour the ſublime. The face of the country, the night, the broken remains of a defeated army, and, above all, the attitude and ſilence of Fingal himſelf, are cricumſtances calculated to impreſs an awful idea on the mind. Offian is moſt ſucceſsful in his night-deſcriptions. Dark images ſuited the melancholy temper of his mind. His poems were all compoſed, after the active part of his life was over; when he was blind, and had ſurvived all the companions of his youth: we therefore find a veil of melancholy thrown over the whole.

in the midſt. Thought on thought rolled over his ſoul. As waves on a ſecret mountain-lake, each with its back of foam. —— He looked; no ſon appeared, with his long-beaming ſpear. The ſighs roſe, crowding, from his ſoul; but he concealed his grief. —— At length I ſtood beneath an oak. No voice of mine was heard. What could I ſay to Fingal in his hour of woe? —— His words roſe, at length, in the midſt: the people ſhrunk backward, as he ſpoke *).

Where

*) The abaſhed behaviour of the army of Fingal proceeds rather from ſhame than fear. The king was not of a tyrannical diſpoſition: *He*, as he profeſſes himſelf in the fifth book, *never was a dreadful form, in their preſence, darkened into wrath. His voice was no thunder to their ears: his eye ſent forth no death.* —— The firſt ages of ſociety are not the times of arbitrary power. As the wants of mankind are few, they retain their independence. It is an advanced ſtate of civilization, that moulds the mind to that ſubmiſſion to government, of which ambitious magiſtrates take advantage, and raiſe themſelves into abſolute power.

Where is the ſon of Selma, he who led in war? I behold not his ſteps, among my people, ——

It is a vulgar error, that the common Highlanders lived, in abject ſlavery, under their chiefs. Their high ideas of, and attachment to, the heads of their families, probably, led the unintelligent into this miſtake. —— When the honour of the tribe was concerned, the commands of the chief were obeyed, without reſtriction: but, if individuals were oppreſſed, they threw themſelves into the arms of a neighbouring clan, aſſumed a new name, and were encouraged and protected. The fear of this deſertion, no doubt, made the chiefs cautious in their government. As their conſequence, in the eyes of others, was in proportion to the number of their people, they took care to avoid every thing that tended to diminiſh it.

It was but very lately that the authority of the laws extended to the Highlands. Before that time the clans were governed, in civil affairs, not by the verbal commands of the chief, but by what they called *Cleebda*, or the traditional precedents of their anceſtors. When differences happened between individuals, ſome of the oldeſt men in the tribe were choſen umpires between the

ple, returning from the field. Fell the young bounding roe, who was ſo ſtately on my hills? —— He fell; —— for ye are ſilent. The ſhield of war is broken. —— Let his armour be near to Fingal; and the ſword of dark-brown Luno. I am waked on my hills: with morning I deſcend to war.

*) High

the parties, to decide according to the *Clechda*. The chief interpoſed his authority, and, invariably, enforced the deciſion. —— In their wars, which were frequent, on account of family-feuds, the chief was leſs reſerved in the exſecution of his authority; and even then he ſeldom extended it to the taking the life of any of his tribe. —— No crime was capital, except murder; and that was very unfrequent in the highlands. No corporal puniſhment, of any kind, was inflicted. The memory of an affront of this ſort would remain, for ages, in a family; and they would ſeize every opportunity to be revenged, unleſs it came immediately from the hands of the chief himſelf: in that caſe it was taken, rather as a fatherly correction, than a legal puniſhment for offences.

*) High on Cormul's rock, an oak flamed to the wind. The grey ſkirts of miſt are rolled around; thither ſtrode the king in his wrath.

*) This rock of Cormul is often mentioned in the preceding part of the poem. It was on it Fingal and Oſſian ſtood to view the battle. The cuſtom of retiring from the army, on the night prior to their engaging in battle, was univerſal among the kings of the Caledonians. —— Trenmor, the moſt renowned of the anceſtors of Fingal, is mentioned as the firſt who inſtituted this cuſtom. Succeeding bards attributed it to a hero of a latter period. —— —— In an old poem, which begins with *Mac-Arcath nan ceud fróil*, this cuſtom of retiring from the army, before an engagement, is numbered, among the wiſe inſtitutions of Fergus, the ſon of Arc or Arcath, the firſt king of Scots. I ſhall here tranſlate the paſſage; in ſome other note I may, probably, give all that remains of the poem. *Fergus of the hundred ſtreams, ſon of Arcath, who fought of old: thou didſt firſt retire at night: when the foe rolled before thee, in echoing fields. Nor bending in reſt is the king: he gathers battles in his ſoul. Fly, ſon of the ſtranger, with morn he ſhall ruſh abroad.* When, or by whom, this poem was writ, is uncertain.

It

wrath. Diſtant from the hoſt he always lay; when battle burnt within his ſoul. On two ſpears hung his ſhield on high; the gleaming ſign of death; that ſhield, which he was wont to ſtrike, by night, before he ruſhed to war. — It was then his warriors knew, when the king was to lead in ſtrife; for never was this buckler heard, till Fingal's wrath aroſe. —— Unequal were his ſteps on high, as he ſhone in the beam of the oak; he was dreadful as the form of the ſpirit of night, when he cloaths, on hills, his wild geſtures with miſt, and, iſſuing forth, on the troubled ocean, mounts the car of winds.

Nor ſettled, from the ſtorm, is Erin's ſea of war; they glittered, beneath the moon, and, low-humming, ſtill rolled on the field. —— Alone are the ſteps of Cathmor, before them on the heath; he hung forward, with all his arms, on Morven's flying hoſt. Now had he come to the moſſy cave, where Filtan lay in night. One tree was bent above the ſtream, which

It has much of the ſpirit of the ancient compoſition of the Scotiſh bards; and ſeems to be a cloſe imitation of the manner of Oſſian.

which glittered over the rock. —— There ſhone to the moon the broken ſhield of Clatho's ſon; and near it, on graſs, lay hairy-footed Bran *). He had miſſed the chief on Mora, and

*) This circumſtance, concerning Bran, the favourite dog of Fingal, is perhaps, one of the moſt affecting paſſages in the poem. I remember to have met with an old poem, compoſed long after the time of Oſſian, wherein a ſtory of this ſort is very happily introduced. In one of the invaſions of the Danes, Ullin-clundu, a conſiderable chief, on the weſtern coaſt of Scotland, was killed in a rencounter with a flying party of the enemy, who had landed, at no great diſtance, from the place of his reſidence. The few followers who attended him, were alſo ſlain. —— The young wife of Ullin-clundu, who had not heard of his fall, fearing the worſt, on account of his long delay, alarmed the reſt of his tribe, who went in ſearch of him along the ſhore. They did not find him; and the beautiful widow became disconſolate. At length he was discovered, by means of his dog, who ſat on a rock beſide the body, for ſome days. —— The poem is not juſt now in my hands; otherwiſe its poetical merit might induce me, to preſent the reader with a tranſlation of it. The ſtanza

and ſearched him along the wind. He thought that the blue-eyed hunter ſlept; he lay upon his ſhield. No blaſt came over the heath, unknown to bounding Bran.

Cathmor ſaw the white-breaſted dog; he ſaw the broken ſhield. Darkneſs is blown back on his ſoul; he remembers the falling away of the people. They come, a ſtream; are rolled away; another race ſucceeds. —— "But ſome mark the fields, as they paſs, with their own mighty names. The heath, thro' dark-brown years, is theirs; ſome blue ſtream winds to their fame. —— Of theſe be the chief of Atha, when he lays him down on earth. Often may the voice of future times meet

ſtanza concerning the dog, whoſe name was Du-chos, or *Blackfoot*, is very deſcriptive.

"Dark-ſided Du-chos! feet of wind! cold is thy ſeat on rocks. He (the dog) ſees the roe; his ears are high; and half he bounds away. He looks around; but Ullin ſleeps; he droops again his head. The winds come paſt; dark Du-chos thinks, that Ullin's voice is there. But ſtill he beholds him ſilent, laid amidſt the waving heath. Dark-ſided Du-chos, his voice no more ſhall ſend thee over the heath!"

meet Cathmor in the air: when he ſtrides from wind to wind, or folds himſelf in the wing of a ſtorm."

Green Erin gathered round the king, to hear the voice of his power. Their joyful faces bend, unequal, forward, in the light of the oak. They who were terrible, were removed: Lubar *) winds again in their hoſt. Cathmor was that beam from heaven, which ſhone, when his people were dark. He was honoured

*) In order to illuſtrate this paſſage, it is proper to lay before the reader the ſcene of the two preceding battles. Between the hills of Mora and Lona lay the plain of Moi-lena, thro' which ran the river Lubar. The firſt battle, wherein Gaul, the ſon of Morni, commanded on the Caledonian ſide, was fought on the banks of Lubar. As there was little advantage obtained, on either ſide, the armies, after the battle, retained their former poſitions.

In the ſecond battle, wherein Fillan commanded, the Iriſh, after the fall of Foldath, were driven up the hill of Lona: but, upon the coming of Cathmor to their aid, they regained their former ſituation, and drove back the Caledonians, in their turn: ſo that *Lubar winded again in their hoſt.*

ed in the midſt. Their ſouls roſe trembling around. The king alone no gladneſs ſhewed; no ſtranger he to war.

Why is the king ſo ſad? ſaid Malthos eagle-eyed. —— Remains there a foe at Lubar? Lives there among them, who can lift the ſpear? Not ſo peaceful was thy father, Borbar-dúthul *), ſovereign of ſpears. His rage was a fire

*) Borbar-duthul, the father of Cathmor, was the brother of that Colc-ulla, who is ſaid, in the beginning of the fourth book, to have rebelled againſt Cormac king of Ireland. Borbar-duthul ſeems to have retained all the prejudice of his family againſt the ſucceſſion of the poſterity of Conar, on the Iriſh throne. From this ſhort epiſode we learn ſome facts, which tend to throw light on the hiſtory of the times. It appears, that, when Swaran invaded Ireland, he was only oppoſed by the Caël, who poſſeſſed Ulſter, and the north of that iſland. Calmar, the ſon of Matha, whoſe gallant behaviour and death are related in the third book of Fingal, was the only chief of the race of the Fir-bolg, that joined the Caël, or Iriſh Caledonians, during the invaſion of Swaran. The indecent joy,

a fire that always burned: his joy over fallen foes was great. Three days feaſted the grey-haired hero, when he heard that Calmar fell: Calmar, who aided the race of Ullin, from Lara of the ſtreams. —— Often did he feel, with his hands, the ſteel which, they ſaid, had pierced his foe. He felt it with his hands, for Borbar-dúthul's eyes had failed. —— Yet was the king a ſun to his friends; a gale to lift their branches round. Joy was around him in his halls: he loved the ſons of Bolga. His name remains in Atha, like the awful memory of ghoſts, whoſe preſence was terrible, but they blew the ſtorm away. —— Now let the voices *) of Erin raiſe the ſoul of the king; he that ſhone when war was dark, and laid the migh-

which Borbar-duthul expreſſed, upon the death of Calmar, is well ſuited with that ſpirit of revenge, which ſubſiſted, univerſally, in every country where the feudal ſyſtem was eſtabliſhed. —— It would appear, that ſome perſon had carried to Borbar-duthul that weapon, with which, it was pretended, Calmar had been killed.

*) *The voices of Erin*, a poetical expreſſion for the bards of Ireland.

mighty low. —— Fonar, from that grey-browed rock, pour the tale of other times: pour it on wide-ſkirted Erin, as it ſettles round.

To me, ſaid Cathmor, no ſong ſhall riſe: nor Fonar ſit on the rock of Lubar. The mighty there are laid low. Disturb not their ruſhing ghoſts. Far, Malthos, far remove the ſound of Erin's ſong. I rejoice not over the foe, when he ceaſes to lift the ſpear. With morning we pour our ſtrength abroad. Fingal is wakened on his ecchoing hill.

Like waves, blown back by ſudden winds, Erin retired, at the voice of the king. Deep-rolled into the field of night, they ſpread their humming tribes: Beneath his own tree, at intervalls, each *) bard ſat down with his harp. They

*) Not only the kings, but every petty chief, had their bards attending them, in the field, in the days of Oſſian; and theſe bards, in proportion to the power of the chiefs, who retained them, had a number of inferior bards in their train. Upon ſolemn occaſions, all the bards, in the army, would join in one chorus; either when they celebrated their victories, or lamented the

They raiſed the ſong, and touched the ſtring: each to the chief he loved. —— Before a burning oak Sul-malla touched, at times, the harp.

death of a perſon, worthy and renowned, ſlain in the war. The words were of the compoſition of the arch-bard, retained by the king himſelf, who generally attained to that high office, on account of his ſuperior genius for poetry. As the perſons of the bards were ſacred, and the emoluments of their office conſiderable, the order, in ſucceeding times, became very numerous and inſolent. It would appear, that, after the introduction of Chriſtianity, ſome ſerved in the double capacity of bards and clergymen. It was, from this circumſtance, that they had the name of *Chlére*, which is, probably, derived from the latin Clericus. The *Chlére*, be their name derived from what it will, became, at laſt, a public nuiſance: for, taking advantage of their ſacred character, they went about, in great bodies, and lived, at diſcretion, in the houſes of the chiefs; till another party, of the ſame order, drove them away by mere dint of ſatire. Some of the indelicate diſputes of theſe worthy poetical combatants are handed down, by tradition, and ſhew, how much the bards, at laſt, abuſed the privileges, which the admiration of their coun-

harp. She touched the harp, and heard, between, the breezes in her hair. —— In darkneſs near, lay the king of Atha, beneath an aged tree. The beam of the oak was turned from him; he ſaw the maid, but was not ſeen. His ſoul poured forth, in ſecret, when he beheld her tearful eye. —— But battle is before thee, ſon of Borbar-dúthul.

Amidſt the harp, at intervals, ſhe liſtened whether the warriors ſlept. Her ſoul was up; ſhe longed, in ſecret, to pour her own ſad ſong. —— The field is ſilent. On their wings, the blaſts of night retire. The bards had ceaſed; and meteors came, red-winding with their ghoſts. —— The ſky grew dark: the forms of the dead were blended with the clouds. But

countrymen had conferred on the order. —— It was this inſolent behaviour that induced the chiefs to retrench their number, and to take away thoſe privileges which they were no longer worthy to enjoy. Their indolence, and diſpoſition to lampoon, extinguiſhed all the poetical fervour, which diſtinguiſhed their predeceſſors, and makes us the leſs regret the extinction of the order.

But heedleſs bends the daughter of Conmor, over the decaying flame. Thou wert alone in her ſoul, car-borne chief of Atha. She raiſed the voice of the ſong, and touched the harp between.

*) Clun-galo came; ſhe miſſed the maid. —— Where art thou, beam of light? Hunters, from the moſſy rock, ſaw you the blue-eyed fair? —— Are her ſteps on graſſy Lumon, near the bed of roes? —— Ah me! I behold her bow in the hall. Where art thou, beam of light?

**) Ceaſe, love of Conmor, ceaſe; I hear thee not on the ridgy heath. My eye is turned to the king, whoſe path is terrible in war. He, for whom my ſoul is up, in the ſeaſon of my

*) Clun-galo, *white knee*, the wife of Conmor, king of Inis-huna, and the mother of Sul-malla. She is here repreſented, as miſſing her daughter, after ſhe had fled with Cathmor. This ſong is very beautiful in the original. The expreſſive cadences of the meaſure are inimitably ſuited to the ſituation of the mind of Sul-malla.

**) Sul-malla replies to the ſuppoſed queſtions of her mother. Towards the middle of this paragraph ſhe

my reſt. —— Deep-boſomed in war he ſtands, he beholds me not from his cloud. —— Why, ſun of Sul-malla, doſt thou not look forth? —— I dwell in darkneſs here; wide over me flies the ſhadowy miſt. Filled with dew are my locks: look thou from thy cloud, o ſun of Sul-malla's ſoul. —— * * * * * * * * * *.

ſhe calls Cathmor *the ſun of her ſoul*, and continues the metaphor throughout. Thoſe, who deliver this ſong down by tradition, ſay that there is a part of the original loſt. —— This book ends, we may ſuppoſe, about the middle of the third night, from the opening of the poem.

* * * * * * * * *

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK SEVENTH.

ARGUMENT to Book VII.

This book begins, about the middle of the third night from the opening of the poem. The poet deſcribes a kind of miſt, which roſe, by night, from the lake of Lego, and was the uſual reſidence of the ſouls of the dead, during the interval between their deceaſe and the funeral ſong. The appearance of the ghoſt of Fillan, above the cave where his body lay. His voice comes to Fingal, on the rock of Cormul. The king ſtrikes the ſhield of Trenmor, which was an infallible ſign of his appearing in arms himſelf. The extraordinary effect of the ſound of the ſhield. Sul-malla, ſtarting from ſleep, awakes Cathmor. Their affecting diſcourſe. She inſiſts with him, to ſue for peace; he reſolves to continue the war. He directs her to retire to the neighbouring valley of Lona, which was the reſidence of an old Druid, until the battle of the next day ſhould be over. He awakes his army with the ſound of his ſhield. The ſhield deſcribed. Fonar, the bard, at the deſire of Cathmor, relates the firſt ſettlement of the Firbolg in Ireland, under their leader Larthon. Morning comes. Sul-malla retires to the valley of Lona. A Lyric ſong concludes the book.

TEMO-

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK SEVENTH.

*) From the wood-skirted waters of Lego, ascend, at times, grey-bosomed mists, when the gates of the west are closed on the sun's

*) No poet departs less from his subject than Ossian. No far-fetched ornaments are introduced; the episodes rise from, and are indeed essential to, the story of the poem. Even his lyric songs, where he most indulges the extravagance of fancy, naturally spring from his subject. Their propriety and connection with the rest of the poem, shew that the Celtic bard was guided by judgment, amidst the wildest flights of imagination. It is a common supposition among mankind, that a ge-

ſun's eagle-eye. Wide, over Lara's ſtream, is poured the vapour dark and deep: the moon, like a dim ſhield, is ſwimming thro' its folds. With this, clothe the ſpirits of old their ſudden

a genius for poetry and ſound ſenſe ſeldom center in the ſame perſon. The obſervation is far from being juſt; for true genius and judgment muſt be inſeparable. The wild flights of fancy, without the guidance of judgment, are, as Horace obſerves, like the dreams of a ſick man, irkſome and confuſed. Fools can never write good poems. A warm imagination, it is true, domineers over a common portion of ſenſe; and hence it is that ſo few have ſucceeded in the poetical way. But when an uncommon ſtrength of judgment, and a glowing fancy, are properly tempered together, they, and they only, produce genuine poetry.

The preſent book is not the leaſt intereſting part of Temora. The awful images, with which it opens, are calculated to prepare the mind for the ſolemn ſcenes which are to follow. Oſſian, always, throws an air of conſequence on every circumſtance which relates to Fingal. The very ſound of his ſhield produces extraordinary effects; and theſe are heightened, one above another, in

den geſtures on the wind, when they ſtride, from blaſt to blaſt, along the duſky face of the night. Often, blended with the gale, to ſome

in a beautiful climax. The diſtreſs of Sul-malla, and her conference with Cathmor, are very affecting. The deſcription of his ſhield is a curious piece of antiquity; and is a proof of the early knowledge of navigation among the inhabitants of Britain and Ireland. Oſſian, in ſhort, throughout this book, is often ſublime, and always pathetic.

Lego, ſo often mentioned by Oſſian, was a lake, in Connaught, in which the river Lara emptied itſelf. On the banks of this lake dwelt Branno, the father-in-law of Oſſian, whom the poet often viſited, before and after the death of Evir-allin. This circumſtance, perhaps, occaſioned the partiality, with which he always mentions Lego and Lara, and accounts for his drawing ſo many of his images from them. The ſignification of Leigo, is, *the lake of diſeaſe*, probably ſo called, on account of the moraſſes which ſurrounded it.

As the miſt, which roſe from the lake of Lego, occaſioned diſeaſes and death, the bards feign-

ſome warrior's grave, they roll the miſt, a grey dwelling to his ghoſt, until the ſongs ariſe.

A ſound came from the deſart; the ruſhing courſe of Conar in winds. He poured his deep miſt on Fillan, at blue-winding Lubar. —— Dark and mournful ſat the ghoſt, bending in his grey ridge of ſmoak. The blaſt, at times, rolled him together: but the lovely form

feigned, as here, that it was the reſidence of the ghoſts of the deceaſed, during the interval between their death and the pronouncing of the funeral elegy over their tombs; for it was not allowable, without that ceremony was performed, for the ſpirits of the dead, to mix with their anceſtors, *in their airy halls.* It was the buſineſs of the ſpirit of the neareſt relation to the deceaſed, to take the miſt of Lego, and pour it over the grave. We find here Conar, the ſon of Trenmor, the firſt king of Ireland, according to Oſſian, performing this office for Fillan, as it was in the cauſe of the family of Conar, that that hero was killed. The deſcription of the appearance of the ghoſt is picturesque and ſolemn, impoſing a ſtill attention to the ſpeech that follows it, which, with great propriety, is ſhort and awful.

form returned again. It returned with flow-bending eyes: and dark winding of locks of miſt.

It is *) dark. The ſleeping hoſt were ſtill, in the ſkirts of night. The flame decayed, on the hill of Fingal; the king lay lonely

*) It has been obſerved, that Oſſian takes great delight in deſcribing night-ſcenes. This, in ſome meaſure, is to be attributed to his melancholy diſpoſition, which delighted to dwell upon ſolemn objects. Even other poets, of a leſs ſerious turn than Oſſian, have beſt ſucceeded in deſcriptions of this ſort. Solemn ſcenes make the moſt laſting impreſſions on the imagination; gay and light objects only touch the ſurface of the ſoul, and vaniſh. The human mind is naturally ſerious: levity and chearfulneſs may be amiable, but they are too often the characteriſtics of weakneſs of judgment, and a deplorable ſhallowneſs of ſoul. —— The night-deſcriptions of Oſſian were in high repute among ſucceeding bards. One of them delivered a ſentiment, in a diſtich, more favourable to his taſte for poetry, than to his gallantry towards the ladies. I ſhall here give a tranſlation of it.

"More

ly on his ſhield. His eyes were half-cloſed in ſleep; the voice of Fillan came. "Sleeps the husband of Clatho? Dwells the father of the fallen in reſt? Am I forgot in the folds of darkneſs; lonely in the ſeaſon of dreams?"

Why art thou in the midſt of my dreams? ſaid Fingal, as, ſudden, he roſe. Can I forget thee, my ſon, or thy path of fire in the field? Not ſuch, on the ſoul of the king, come the deeds of the mighty in arms. They are not there a beam of lightening, which is ſeen, and is then no more. —— I remember thee, o Fillan, and my wrath begins to riſe.

The

"More pleaſant to me is the night of Cona, dark-ſtreaming from Oſſian's harps; more pleaſant it is to me, than a white-boſomed dweller between my arms; than a fair-handed daughter of heroes, in the hour of reſt."

Tho' tradition is not very ſatisfactory concerning the hiſtory of this poet, it has taken care to inform us, that he was *very old*, when he wrote the diſtich. He lived (in what age is uncertain) in one of the weſtern iſles, and his name was Turloch Ciabhglas, or *Turloch of the grey locks.*

The king took his deathful ſpear, and ſtruck the deeply ſounding ſhield: his ſhield *) that hung high in night, the dismal ſign of war.

*) Succeeding bards have recorded many fables, concerning this wonderful ſhield. They ſay, that Fingal, in one of his expeditions into Scandinavia, met, in one of the iſlands of Juteland, with Luno, a celebrated magician. This Luno was the Vulcan of the north, and had made compleat ſuits of armour for many of the heroes of Scandinavia. One disagreeable circumſtance was, that every perſon who wanted to employ Luno to make armour for him, was obliged to overcome him, at his own magic art. — Fingal, unſkilled in ſpells or enchantments, effected with dint of prowess, what others failed in, with all their ſupernatural art. When Luno demanded a trial of ſkill from Fingal, the king drew his ſword, cut off the ſkirts of the magician's robe, and obliged him, bare as he was, to fly before him. Fingal purſued, but Luno, coming to the ſea, by his magic art, walked upon the waves. Fingal purſued him in his ſhip, and, after a chace of ten days, came up with him, in the iſle of Sky, and obliged him to erect a furnace, and make him this ſhield, and his famous ſword, poetically called, *the ſon of*

war! —— Ghoſts fled on every ſide, and rolled their gathered forms on the wind. —— Thrice from the winding vale aroſe the voices of death. The harps *) of the bards, untouched, ſound mournful over the hill.

He

Luno. —— Such are the ſtrange fictions, which the modern Scotch and Iriſh bards have formed on the original of Oſſian.

*) It was the opinion of the times, that, on the night preceding the death of a perſon worthy and renowned, the harps of thoſe bards, who were retained by his family, emitted melancholy ſounds. This was attributed, to uſe Oſſian's expreſſion, to *the light touch of ghoſts*; who were ſuppoſed to have a fore-knowledge of events. The ſame opinion prevailed long in the north, and the particular ſound was called, *the warning voice of the dead. The voice of deaths*, mentioned in the preceding ſentence, was of a different kind. Each perſon was ſuppoſed to have an attendant ſpirit, who aſſumed his form and voice, on the night preceding his death, and appeared, to ſome, in the attitude, in which the perſon was to die. The VOICES OF DEATH were the foreboding ſhrieks of thoſe *ſpirits*.

He ſtruck again the ſhield: battles roſe in the dreams of his hoſt. The wide-tumbling ſtrife is gleaming over their ſouls. Blue-ſhielded kings deſcend to war. Backward-looking armies fly; and mighty deeds are half-hid, in the bright gleams of ſteel.

But when the third ſound aroſe; deer ſtarted from the clefts of their rocks. The ſcreams of fowl are heard, in the deſart, as each flew, frighted, on his blaſt. —— The ſons of Albin half-roſe, and half-aſſumed their ſpears. — But ſilence rolled back on the hoſt: they knew the ſhield of the king. Sleep returned to their eyes: the field was dark and ſtill.

*) No ſleep was thine in darkneſs, blue-eyed daughter of Conmor! Sul-malla heard the

*) A bard, ſeveral ages more modern than Oſſian, was ſo ſenſible of the beauty of this paſſage, as to give a cloſe imitation of it, in a poem, concerning the great actions of Keneth Mac-Alpin, king of Scotland, againſt the Picts. As the poem is long, I ſhall only give here the ſtory of it, with a translation of that paragraph, which bears the neareſt reſemblance to the paſ-

the dreadful ſhield, and roſe, amidſt the night.
—— Her ſteps are towards the king of Atha.
—— Can danger ſhake his daring ſoul! In doubt

ſage of Temora juſt now before me. When Keneth was making preparations for that war, which terminated in the ſubverſion of the Pictiſh kingdom: Flathal, his ſiſter, had demanded permiſſion from him, of attending him in the expedition; in order to have a ſhare in revenging the death of her father Alpin, who had been barbarouſly murdered by the Picts. The king, tho' he, perhaps, approved of the gallant diſpoſition of his ſiſter, refuſed, on account of her ſex, to grant her requeſt. The heroine, however, dreſſed herſelf in the habit of a young warrior; and, in that diſguiſe, attended the army, and performed many gallant exploits. On the night preceding the final overthrow of the Picts, Keneth, as was the cuſtom among the kings of Scots, retired to a hill, without the verge of the camp, to meditate on the diſpoſitions, he was to make in the approaching battle. Flathal, who was anxious about the ſafety of her brother, went, privately, to the top of an adjoining rock, and kept watch there, to prevent his being ſurprized by the enemy. —— Keneth fell aſleep, in his arms; and Flathal obſerved a body

doubt: ſhe ſtands, with bending eyes. Heaven burns with all its ſtars.

Again

dy of the Picts ſurrounding the hill, whereon the king lay. —— The ſequel of the ſtory may be gathered from the words of the bard.

"Her eyes, like ſtars, roll over the plain. She trembled for Alpin's race. She ſaw the gleaming foe. Her ſteps aroſe: ſhe ſtopt. —— "Why ſhould he know of Flathal? he the king of men! —— But hark! the ſound is high. — It is but the wind of night, lone-whiſtling in my locks. —— I hear the ecchoing ſhields!" —— Her ſpear fell from her hand. The lofty rock reſounds. —— He roſe, a gathered cloud.

"Who wakes Conad of Albin, in the midſt of his ſecret hill? I heard the ſoft voice of Flathal. Why, maid, doſt thou ſhine in war? The daughters roll their blue eyes, by the ſtreams. No field of blood is theirs.

"Alpin of Albin was mine, the father of Flathal of harps. He is low, mighty Conad, and my ſoul is fire. Could Flathal, by the ſecret ſtream, behold the blood of her foes? I am a young eagle, on Dura, king of Drumalbin of winds." ——

Again the ſhield reſounds! —— She ruſhed. —— She ſtopt. —— Her voice half-roſe. It failed. —— She ſaw him, amidſt his arms, that gleamed to heaven's fire. She ſaw him dim in his locks, that roſe to nightly wind. —— Away, for fear, ſhe turned her ſteps. —— "Why ſhould the king of Erin awake? Thou art not a dream to his reſt, daughter of Inis-huna."

More dreadful rung the ſhield. Sul-malla ſtarts. Her helmet falls. Loud-ecchoed Lubar's rock, as over it rolled the ſteel. —— Burſting from the dreams of night, Cathmor half-roſe, beneath his tree. He ſaw the form of the maid, above him, on the rock. A red ſtar, with twinkling beam, looked down thro' her floating hair.

Who

In the ſequel of the piece, the bard does not imitate Oſſian, and his poem is ſo much the worſe for it. —— Keneth, with his ſiſter's aſſiſtance, forced his way thro' the advanced parties of the enemy, and rejoined his own army. The bard has given a catalogue of the Scotch tribes, as they marched to battle; but, as he did not live near the time of Keneth, his accounts are to be little depended on.

*) Who comes thro' night to Cathmor, in the dark ſeaſon of his dreams? Bring'ſt thou ought of war? Who art thou, ſon of night? —— Stand'ſt thou before me, a form of the times of old? A voice from the fold of a cloud, to warn me of Erin's danger?

Nor traveller of night am I, nor voice from folded cloud; but I warn thee of the danger of Erin. Doſt thou hear that ſound? It is not the feeble, king of Atha, that rolls his ſigns on night.

Let the warrior roll his ſigns; to Cathmor they are the ſound of harps. My joy is great, voice of night, and burns over all my thoughts. This is the muſic of kings, on lonely hills, by night;

*) The rapid manner of Oſſian does not often allow him to mark the ſpeeches with the names of the perſons who ſpeak them. To prevent the obſcurity which this might occaſion, I have, ſometimes, uſed the freedom to do it in the tranſlation. In the preſent dialogue between Cathmor and Sul-malla, the ſpeeches are ſo much marked with the characters of the ſpeakers, that no interpolation is neceſſary to diſtinguiſh them from one another.

night; when they light their daring ſouls, the ſons of mighty deeds! The feeble dwell alone, in the valley of the breeze; where miſts lift their morning-ſkirts, from the blue-winding ſtreams.

Not feeble, thou leader of heroes, were they, the fathers of my race. They dwelt in the darkneſs of battle; in their diſtant lands. Yet delights not my ſoul, in the ſigns of death! —— He *), who never yields, comes forth: Awake the bard of peace!

Like a rock with its trickling waters, ſtood Cathmor in his tears. Her voice came, a breeze, on his ſoul, and waked the memory of her land; where ſhe dwelt by her peaceful ſtreams, before he came to the war of Conmor.

Daugther

*) Fingal is ſaid to have never been overcome in battle. From this proceeded that title of honour, which is always beſtowed on him in tradition, *Fiön-ghall na buai'*, FINGAL OF VICTORIES. In a poem, juſt now in my hands, which celebrates ſome of the great actions of Arthur the famous Britiſh hero, that appellation is often beſtowed on him. —— The poem, from the phraſeology, appears to be ancient; and is, perhaps, tho' that is not mentioned, a tranſlation from the Welſh language.

Daughter of ſtrangers, he ſaid; (ſhe trembling turned away) long have I marked in her armour, the young pine of Inis-huna. —— But my ſoul, I ſaid, is folded in a ſtorm. Why ſhould that beam ariſe, till my ſteps return in peace? Have I been pale in thy preſence, when thou bidſt me to fear the king? —— The time of danger, o maid, is the ſeaſon of my ſoul; for then it ſwells, a mighty ſtream, and rolls me on the foe.

Beneath the moſs-covered rocks of Lona, near his own winding ſtream; grey in his locks of age, dwells Clonmal *) king of harps. Above him is his ecchoing oak, and the dun bounding of roes. The noiſe **) of our ſtrife reaches his ear, as he bends in the thoughts

*) Claon-mal, *crooked eye-brow.* From the retired life of this perſon, it appears, that he was of the order of the Druids; which ſuppoſition is not, at all, invalidated by the appellation of *king of harps*, here beſtowed on him: for all agree, that the Bards were of the number of the Druids originally.

**) By this circumſtance, the poet inſinuates, that the valley of Lona was very near the field of

thoughts of years. There let thy reſt be, Sulmalla, until our battle ceaſe. Until I return, in my arms, from the ſkirts of the evening-miſt, that riſes, on Lona, round the dwelling of my love.

A light fell on the ſoul of the maid; it roſe kindled before the king. She turned her face to Cathmor; her locks are ſtruggling with winds. Sooner *) ſhall the eagle of heaven be

battle. In this indirect manner of narration, conſiſts the great difference between poetical and hiſtorical narration.

*) In after ages, the alluſions of the bards, to particular paſſages of the works of Oſſian, were very numerous. I have met with a poem, which was writ three centuries ago, in which the bard recommends, to a lady of his own times, the behaviour of Sul-malla, in this place. The poem has little to recommend it, excepting the paſſage, of which I am to give a tranſlation here. The bards, when they alluded to the works of Oſſian, ſeem to have caught ſome portion of his fire: upon other occaſions, their compoſitions are little more than a group of epithets reduced into meaſure. Only their poems, upon martial ſubject, fall under this cenſure. Their love-

be torn, from the ſtream of his roaring wind, when he ſees the dun prey, before him, the young

love-ſonnets, and paſtoral verſes, are far from wanting their beauties: but a great deal of theſe depend upon a certain *curioſa felicitas* of expreſſion in the original; ſo that they would appear greatly to their disadvantage in another language. What the modern bards are moſt inſupportable in, are their nauſeous, panegyrics upon their patrons. We ſee, in them, a petty tyrant, whoſe name was never heard, beyond the contracted limits of his own valley, ſtalking forth in all the trappings of a finiſhed hero. From their frequent alluſions, however, to the entertainments which he gave, and the *ſtrength of his cups*, we may eaſily gueſs, from whence proceeded the praiſe of an indolent and effeminate race of men: for the bards, from the great court paid, originally, to their order, became, at laſt, the moſt flagitious and diſpirited of all mortals. Their compoſitions, therefore, on this ſide of a certain period, are dull and trivial to the higheſt degree. By laviſhing their praiſes upon unworthy objects, their panegyrics became common and little regarded; they were thruſt out of the houſes of the chiefs, and wandered about, from tribe to tribe, in the double capacity of

poet

young ſons of the bounding roe, than thou, o Cathmor, be turned from the ſtrife of renown. —— Soon may I ſee thee, warrior, from

poet and harper. Galled with this uſage, they betook themſelves to ſatire and lampoon, ſo that the compoſitions of the bards, for more than a century back, are almoſt altogether of the ſarcaſtical kind. In this they ſucceeded well; for as there is no language more copious than the Galic, ſo there is ſcarcely any equally adapted to thoſe quaint turns of expreſſion which belong to ſatire. —— Tho' the chiefs disregarded the lampoons of the bards, the vulgar, out of mere fear, received them into their habitations, entertained them, as well as their circumſtances would allow, and kept exiſting, for ſome years, an order, which, by their own miſmanagement, had deſervedly fallen into contempt.

To return to the old poem, which gave occaſion to this note. It is an addreſs to the wife of a chief, upon the departure of her husband to war. The paſſage, which alludes to Sul-malla, is, this:

"Why art thou mournful on rocks; or lifting thine eyes on waves? His ſhip has bounded to-

from the ſkirts of the evening-miſt, when it is rolled around me, on Lona of the ſtreams. While yet thou art diſtant far, ſtrike, Cathmor, ſtrike the ſhield, that joy may return to my darkned ſoul, as I lean on the moſſy rock. But if thou ſhould fall: —— I am in the land of ſtrangers; —— O ſend thy voice, from thy cloud, to the maid of Inis-huna.

Young branch of green-headed Lumon, why doſt thou ſhake in the ſtorm? Often has Cathmor returned, from darkly-rolling wars. The darts of death are but hail to me; they have often bounded from my ſhield. I have riſen brightned from battle, like a meteor from a ſtormy cloud. Return not, fair beam, from thy vale, when the roar of battle grows. Then might the foe eſcape, as from my fathers of old.

They

towards battle. His joy is in the murmur of fields. Look to the beams of old, to the virgins of Oſſian of harps. Sul-malla keeps not her eagle, from the field of blood. She would not tear her eagle, from the ſounding courſe of renown."

They told to Son-mor *), of Clunar **), ſlain by Cormac the giver of ſhells. Three days darkned Son-mor, over his brother's fall. —— His ſpouſe beheld the ſilent king, and foreſaw his ſteps to war. She prepared the bow, in ſecret, to attend her blue-ſhielded hero. To her dwelt darkneſs, at Atha, when the warrior moved to his fields. —— From their hundred ſtreams, by night, poured down the ſons of Alnecma. They had heard the ſhield of the king, and their rage aroſe. In clanging arms, they moved along, towards Ullin the land of groves. Son-mor ſtruck his ſhield, at times, the leader of the war.

Far

*) Són-mor, *tall handſome man.* He was the father of Borbar-duthul, chief of Atha, and grandfather to Cathmor himſelf. The propriety of this epiſode is evident. But, tho' it appears here to be only introduced as an example to Sul-malla; the poet probably had another deſign in view, which was further to illuſtrate the antiquity of the quarrel between the Firbolg and Caël.

**) Cluan-er, *man of the field.* This chief was killed in battle by Cormac Mac-Conar, king of Ireland, the father of Roscrana, the firſt wife of Fingal. The ſtory is alluded to in other poems.

Far behind followed Sul-allin*), over the ſtreamy hills. She was a light on the mountain, when they croſſed the vale below. Her ſteps were ſtately on the vale, when they roſe on the moſſy hill. —— She feared to approach the king, who left her in Atha of hinds. But when the roar of battle roſe; when hoſt was rolled on hoſt; when Son-mor burnt, like the fire of heaven in clouds: with her ſpreading hair came Sul-allin; for ſhe trembled for her king. —— He ſtopt the ruſhing ſtrife, to ſave the love of heroes. —— The foe fled by night; Clunar ſlept without his blood; the blood which ought to be poured upon the warrior's tomb.

Nor roſe the rage of Son-mor, but his days were dark and ſlow. Sul-allin wandered, by her grey ſtreams, with her tearful eyes. Often did ſhe look, on the hero, when he was folded in his thoughts. But ſhe ſhrunk from his eyes, and turned her lone ſteps away. —— Battles roſe, like a tempeſt, and drove the miſt from his ſoul. He beheld, with joy, her ſteps in the hall, and the white riſing of her hands on the harp.

*) In

*) Suil-allin, *beautiful eye*, the wife of Son-mor.

*) In his arms ſtrode the chief of Atha, to where his ſhield hung, high, in night: high on a moſſy bough, over Lubar's ſtreamy roar.

*) The poet returns to his ſubject. The deſcription of the ſhield of Cathmor is valuable, on account of the light it throws on the progreſs of arts in thoſe early times. Thoſe who draw their ideas of remote antiquity from their obſervations on the manners of modern ſavage nations, will have no high opinion of the workmanſhip of Cathmor's ſhield. To remove ſome part of their prejudice, I ſhall only obſerve, that the Belgæ of Britain, who were the anceſtors of the Firbolg, were a commercial people; and commerce, we might prove, from many ſhining examples of our own times, is the proper inlet of arts and ſciences, and all that exalts the human mind. To avoid multiplying notes, I ſhall give here the ſignification of the names of the ſtars, engraved on the ſhield. Ceanmathon, *head of the bear.* Col-derna, *ſlant and ſharp beam.* Ul-oicho, *ruler of night.* Cathlin, *beam of the wave.* Reul-durash, *ſtar of the twilight.* Berthin, *fire of the hill.* Tonthéna, *meteor of the waves.* Theſe etymologies, excepting that of Cean-mathon, are pretty exact. Of it I am not ſo certain; for it is not very prob-

roar. Seven boſſes roſe on the ſhield; the ſeven voices of the king, which his warriors received, from the wind, and marked over all their tribes.

On each boſs is placed a ſtar of night: Canmathon with beams unſhorn; Col-derna riſing from a cloud; Uloicho robed in miſt; and the ſoft beam of Cathlin glittering on a rock. Fair-gleaming on its own blue wave, Reldurath half-ſinks its weſtern light. The red eye of Berthin looks, through a grove, on the ſlow-moving hunter, as he returns, through ſhowery night, with the ſpoils of the bounding roe. — Wide, in the midſt, aroſe the cloudleſs beams of Ton-théna; Ton-théna which looked, by night, on the courſe of the ſea-toſſed Larthon: Larthon, the firſt of Bolga's race, who travelled on the winds *). —— White-boſomed ſpread

probable, that the Firbolg had diſtinguiſhed a conſtellation, ſo very early as the days of Larthon, by the name of the bear.

*) *To travel on the winds*, a poetical expreſſion for ſailing.

ſpread the ſails of the king, towards ſtreamy Inis-fail; dun night was rolled before him, with its ſkirts of miſt. The winds were changeful in heaven, and rolled him from wave to wave. —— Then roſe the fiery-haired Tonthéna, and laughed from her parted cloud. Larthon *) rejoiced at the guiding beam, as it faint-gleamed on the tumbling waters.

Beneath

*) Larthon is compounded of *Lear*, ſea, and *thon*, wave. This name was given to the chief of the firſt colony of the Firbolg, who ſettled in Ireland, on account of his knowledge in navigation. A part of an old poem is ſtill exſtant, concerning this hero. The author of it, probably, took the hint from the epiſode in this book, relating to the firſt diſcovery of Ireland by Larthon. It abounds with thoſe romantic fables of giants and magicians, which diſtinguiſh the compoſitions of the leſs ancient bards. The deſcriptions, contained in it, are ingenious and proportionable to the magnitude of the perſons introduced; but, being unnatural, they are inſipid and tedious. Had the bard kept within the bounds of probability, his genius was far from being contemptible. The exordium of his poem is not deſtitute of merit; but it is the on-

Beneath the ſpear of Cathmor, awaked that voice which awakes the bards. They came, dark-winding, from every ſide; each, with the ſound of his harp. Before them rejoiced the king, as the traveller, in the day of the ſun; when he hears, far-rolling around, the mur-

mur

only part of it, that I think worthy of being preſented to the reader.

"Who firſt ſent the black ſhip, thro' ocean, like a whale thro' the burſting of foam? —— Look, from thy darkneſs, on Cronath, Oſſian of the harps of old! —— Send thy light on the blue-rolling waters, that I may behold the king. —— I ſee him dark in his own ſhell of oak! ſea-toſſed Larthon, thy ſoul is fire. It is careleſs as the wind of thy ſails; as the wave that rolls by thy ſide. But the ſilent green iſle is before thee, with its ſons, who are tall as woody Lumon: Lumon which ſends, from its top, a thouſand ſtreams, white-wandering down its ſides." ——

It may, perhaps, be for the credit of this bard, to translate no more of this poem, for the continuation of his deſcription of the Iriſh giants betrays his want of judgment.

mur of moſſy ſtreams; ſtreams that burſt, in the deſart, from the rock of roes.

Why, ſaid Fonar, hear we the voice of the king, in the ſeaſon of his reſt? Were the dim forms of thy fathers bending in thy dreams? Perhaps they ſtand on that cloud, and wait for Fonar's ſong; often they come to the fields, where their ſons are to lift the ſpear. —— Or ſhall our voice ariſe for him who lifts the ſpear no more; he that conſumed the field, from Moma of the groves?

Not forgot is that cloud in war, bard of other times. High ſhall his tomb riſe, on Moi-lena, the dwelling of renown. But, now, roll back my ſoul to the times of my fathers: to the years when firſt they roſe, on Inis-huna's waves. Nor alone pleaſant to Cathmor is the remembrance of wood-covered Lumon. —— Lumon the land of ſtreams, the dwelling of white-boſomed maids.

*) Lumon of foamy ſtreams, thou riſeſt on Fonar's ſoul! Thy ſun is on thy ſide, on the rocks

*) Lumon, as I have remarked in a preceding note, was a hill, in Inis-huna, near the reſidence of Sul-

rocks of thy bending trees. The dun roe is ſeen from thy furze; the deer lifts his branchy head; for he ſees, at times, the hound, on the half-covered heath. Slow, on the vale, are the ſteps of maids; the white-armed daughters of the bow; they lift their blue eyes to the hill, from amidſt their wandering locks. —— Not there is the ſtride of Larthon, chief of Inis-huna. He mounts the wave on his own dark oak, in Cluba's ridgy bay. That oak which he cut from Lumon, to bound along the ſea. The maids turn their eyes away, leſt the king ſhould be lowly-laid; for never had they ſeen a ſhip, dark rider of the wave!

Now he dares to call the winds, and to mix with the miſt of ocean. Blue Inis-fail roſe,

Sul-malla. This epiſode has an immediate connection with what is ſaid of Larthon, in the deſcription of Cathmor's ſhield. We have there hinted to us only Larthon's firſt voyage to Ireland; here his ſtory is related, at large, and a curious deſcription of his invention of ſhip-building. This conciſe, but expreſſive, epiſode has been much admired in the original. Its brevity is remarkably ſuited to the hurry of the occaſion.

roſe, in ſmoak; but dark-ſkirted night came down. The ſons of Bolga feared. The fiery-haired Ton-théna roſe. Culbin's bay received the ſhip, in the boſom of its ecchoing woods. There, iſſued a ſtream, from Duthuma's horrid cave; where ſpirits gleamed, at times, with their half-finiſhed forms.

Dreams deſcended on Larthon: he ſaw ſeven ſpirits of his fathers. He heard their half-formed words, and dimly beheld the times to come. He beheld the kings of Atha, the ſons of future days. They led their hoſts, along the field, like ridges of miſt, which winds pour, in autumn, over Atha of the groves.

Larthon raiſed the hall of Samla *), to the ſoft ſound of the harp. He went forth to the roes of Erin, to their wonted ſtreams. Nor did he forget green-headed Lumon; he often bounded over his ſeas, to where white-handed Flathal **) looked from the hill of roes. Lumon of the foamy ſtreams, thou riſeſt on Fonar's ſoul.

The

*) Samla, *apparitions*, ſo called from the viſion of Larthon, concerning his poſterity.

**) Flathal, *heavenly, exquiſitely beautiful.* She was the wife of Larthon.

The beam awaked in the eaſt. The miſty heads of the mountains roſe. Valleys ſhew, on every ſide, the grey-winding of their ſtreams. His hoſt heard the ſhield of Cathmor: at once they roſe around; like a crowded ſea, when firſt it feels the wings of the wind. The waves know not whither to roll; they lift their troubled heads.

Sad and ſlow retired Sul-malla to Lona of the ſtreams. She went —— and often turned; her blue eyes rolled in tears. But when ſhe came to the rock, that darkly-covered Lona's vale; ſhe looked, from her burſting ſoul, on the king; and ſunk, at once, behind.

*) Son of Alpin, ſtrike the ſtring. Is there ought of joy in the harp? Pour it then, on the ſoul of Oſſian: it is folded in miſt. — I hear thee, o bard, in my night. But ceaſe the lightly-trembling ſound. The joy of grief

*) The original of this lyric ode is one of the moſt beautiful paſſages of the poem. The harmony and variety of its verſification prove, that the knowledge of muſic was conſiderably advanced in the days of Oſſian. See the ſpecimen of the original.

grief belongs to Oſſian, amidſt his dark-brown years.

Green thorn of the hill of ghoſts, that ſhakeſt thy head to nightly winds! I hear no ſound in thee; is there no ſpirit's windy ſkirt now ruſtling in thy leaves? Often are the ſteps of the dead, in the dark-eddying blaſts; when the moon, a dun ſhield, from the eaſt, is rolled along the ſky.

Ullin, Carril and Ryno, voices of the days of old! Let me hear you, in the darkneſs of Selma, and awake the ſoul of ſongs. — I hear you not, ye children of muſic, in what hall of the clouds is your reſt? Do you touch the ſhadowy harp, robed with morning-miſt, where the ſun comes ſounding forth from his green-headed waves?

5 N059

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK EIGHTH.

BOOK EIGHTH

EPIC POEM

IN

TWELVE

ARGUMENT to Book VIII.

The fourth morning, from the opening of the poem, comes on. Fingal, ſtill continuing in the place, to which he had retired on the preceding night, is ſeen, at intervals, thro' the miſt, which covered the rock of Cormul. The deſcent of the king is deſcribed. He orders Gaul, Dermid, and Carril the bard, to go to the valley of Cluna, and conduct, from thence, to the Caledonian army, Ferad-artho, the ſon of Cairbre, the only perſon remaining of the family of Conar, the firſt king of Ireland. —— The king takes the command of the army, and prepares for battle. Marching towards the enemy, he comes to the cave of Lubar, where the body of Fillan lay. Upon ſeeing his dog Bran, who lay at the entrance of the cave, his grief returns. —— Cathmor arranges the army of the Fir-bolg in order of battle. The appearance of that hero. The general conflict is deſcribed. The actions of Fingal and Cathmor. A ſtorm. The total rout of the Fir-bolg. The two kings engage, in a column of miſt, on the banks of Lubar. Their attitude

ARGUMENT to Book VIII.

tude and conference after the combat. The death of Cathmor. —— Fingal reſigns *the ſpear of Trenmor* to Oſſian. The ceremonies obſerved on that occaſion. —— The ſpirit of Cathmor appears to Sul-malla, in the valley of Lona. Her ſorrow. —— Evening comes on. A feaſt is prepared. — The coming of Ferad-artho is announced by the ſongs of a hundred bards. — The poem cloſes, with a ſpeech of Fingal.

TEMO-

TEMORA:

AN EPIC POEM.

BOOK EIGHTH.

*) As when the wintry winds have ſeized the waves of the mountain-lake, have ſeized them, in ſtormy night, and cloathed them over with ice; white, to the hunter's early

*) In the courſe of my notes, I have made it more my buſineſs to explain, than to examine, critically, the words of Oſſian. The firſt is my province, as the perſon beſt acquainted with them, the ſecond falls to the ſhare of others. I ſhall, however, obſerve, that all the precepts, which Ariſtotle drew from Homer, ought not to be applied to the compoſition of a Celtic bard; nor ought the title of the latter to the *epopea* to be dis-

early eye, the billows ſtill ſeem to roll. He turns his ear to the ſound of each unequal ridge.

disputed, even if he ſhould differ in ſome circumſtances, from a Greek poet. —— Some allowance ſhould be made for the different manners of nations. The genius of the Greeks and Celtæ was extremely diſſimilar. The firſt were lively and loquacious; a manly conciſeneſs of expreſſion diſtinguiſhed the latter. We find, accordingly, that the compoſitions of Homer and Oſſian are marked with the general and oppoſite characters of their reſpective nations; and, conſequently, it is improper to compare the *minutiæ* of their poems together. There are, however, general rules, in the conduct of an epic poem, which, as they are natural, are, likewiſe, univerſal. In theſe the two poets exactly correſpond. This ſimilarity, which could not poſſibly proceed from imitation, is more deciſive, with reſpect to the grand eſſentials of the *epopœa*, than all the precepts of Ariſtotle.

Oſſian is now approaching to the grand cataſtrophe. The preparations he has made, in the preceding book, properly introduce the magnificence of deſcription, with which the preſent book opens, and tend to ſhew that the Celtic bard

ge. But each is ſilent, gleaming, ſtrewn with boughs and tufts of graſs, which ſhake and whiſtle to the wind, over their grey ſeats of froſt:

bard had more art, in working up his fable, than ſome of thoſe, who cloſely imitated the perfect model of Homer. The tranſition from the pathetic to the ſublime is eaſy and natural. Till the mind is opened, by the firſt, it ſcarcely can have an adequate comprehenſion of the ſecond. The ſoft and affecting ſcenes of the ſeventh book form a ſort of contraſt to, and conſequently heighten, the features of the more grand and terrible images of the eighth.

The ſimile, with which this book opens, is, perhaps, the longeſt, and the moſt minutely deſcriptive, of any in the works of Oſſian. The images of it are only familiar to thoſe who live in a cold and mountainous country. They have often ſeen a lake ſuddenly frozen over, and ſtrewed with withered graſs, and boughs torn, by winds, from the mountains, which form its banks: but, I believe, few of them would be of the mind of the ancient bard, who preferred theſe winter-ſcenes to the irriguous vales of May. —— *To me*, ſays he, *bring back my woods, which ſtrew their leaves on blaſts; ſpread the*

froſt: —— ſo ſilent ſhone to the morning the ridges of Morven's hoſt, as each warrior looked up from his helmet towards the hill of

the lake below, with all its frozen waves. Pleaſant is the breeze on the bearded ice; when the moon is broad in heaven, and the ſpirit of the mountain roars. Roll away the green vales of May; they are thoughts of maids, &c. Such are the words of this winter-poet: but what he afterwards adds, gives us to underſtand, that thoſe frigid ſcenes were not his ſole delight; for he ſpeaks, with great tenderneſs, of the *oak-lighted hall of the chief*; and the *ſtrength of the ſhells, at night, when the courſe of winds is abroad.*

If the ſimile of a frozen lake aptly illuſtrates the ſtillneſs and ſilent exſpectation of an army, lying under arms, waiting for the coming of their king; ſo the compariſon of the ſudden riſing of waves, around a ſpirit, is alſo very expreſſive of the tumultuous joy of Fingal's army, upon the appearance of that hero. —— An ancient bard, ſenſible of the beauty of this paſſage, has happily imitated it, in a poem, concerning Kenneth Mac-Alpin, king of Scotland. —— I had occaſion to quote this piece, in a note in the preceding book. Kenneth had retired pri-

vate-

of the king; the cloud-covered hill of Fingal, where he ſtrode, in the rolling of miſt. At times is the hero ſeen, greatly dim in all his arms. From thought to thought rolled the war, along his mighty ſoul.

Now is the coming forth of the king. — Firſt appeared the ſword of Luno; the ſpear half-iſſuing from a cloud, the ſhield ſtill dim in miſt. But when the ſtride of the king came abroad, with all his grey, dewy locks in the wind; then roſe the ſhouts of his hoſt over every moving tribe. They gathered, gleaming, round, with all their ecchoing ſhields. So riſe the green ſeas round a ſpirit, that comes down from the ſqually wind. The traveller hears the ſound afar, and lifts his head over the rock. He looks on the troubled bay, and thinks

vately, by night, to a hill in the neighbourhood of his army, and, upon his return, next morning, the bard ſays, *that he was like the form of a ſpirit, returning to his ſecret bay. In the ſkirt of a blaſt he ſtands. The waves lift their roaring heads. Their green backs are quivering round. Rocks ecchо back their joy.*

thinks he dimly ſees the form. The waves ſport, unwieldy, round, with all their backs of foam.

Far-diſtant ſtood the ſon of Morni, Duthno's race, and Cona's bard. We ſtood far-diſtant; each beneath his tree. We ſhuned the eyes of the king; we had not conquered in the field. —— A little ſtream rolled at my feet: I touched its light wave, with my ſpear. I touched it with my ſpear; not there was the ſoul of Oſſian. It darkly roſe, from thought to thought, and ſent abroad the ſigh.

Son of Morni, ſaid the king; Dermid, hunter of roes! why are ye dark, like two rocks, each with its trickling waters? No wrath gathers on the ſoul of Fingal, againſt the chiefs of men. Ye are my ſtrength in battle; the kindling of my joy in peace. My early voice was a pleaſant gale to your ears, when Fillan prepared the bow. The ſon of Fingal is not here, nor yet the chace of the bounding roes. But why ſhould the breakers of ſhields ſtand, darkened, far away?

Tall they ſtrode towards the king; they ſaw him turned to Mora's wind. His tears came

me down, for his blue-eyed ſon, who ſlept in the cave of ſtreams. But he brightened before them, and ſpoke to the broad-ſhielded kings.

Crommal, with woody rocks, and miſty top, the field of winds, pours forth, to the ſight, blue Lubar's ſtreamy roar. Behind it rolls clear-winding Lavath, in the ſtill vale of deer. A cave is dark in a rock; above it ſtrong-winged eagles dwell; broad-headed oaks, before it, found in Cluna's wind. Within his locks of youth, is Ferad-artho *), blue-eyed

*) Ferad-artho was the ſon of Cairbar Mac-Cormac, king of Ireland. He was the only one, remaining of the race of Conar, the ſon of Trenmor, the firſt Iriſh monarch, according to Oſſian. In order to make this paſſage thoroughly underſtood, it may not be improper to recapitulate ſome part of what has been ſaid in preceding notes. —— Upon the death of Conar the ſon of Treunor, his ſon Cormac ſucceeded on the Iriſh throne. Cormac reigned long. His children were, Cairbar, who ſucceeded him, and Ros-crana, the firſt wife of Fingal. Cairbar, long before the death of his father Cormac, had taken to wife Bos-gala, the daughter of Colgar, one of

eyed king, the ſon of broad ſhielded Cairbar, from Ullin of the roes. He liſtens to the voice of

the moſt powerful chiefs in Connaught; and had, by her, Artho, afterwards king of Ireland. Soon after Artho arrived at man's eſtate, his mother Bos-gala died, and Cairbar took to wife Beltanno, the daughter of Conachar of Ullin, who brought him a ſon, whom he called Ferad-artho, i. e. *a man in the place of Arth.* The occaſion of the name was this. Artho, when his brother was born, was abſent, on an expedition in the ſouth of Ireland. A falſe report was brought to his father, that he was killed. —— *Cairbar*, to uſe the words of the poem on the ſubject, *darkened for his fair-haired ſon. He turned to the young beam of light, the ſon of Beltanno of Conachar. Thou ſhalt be Ferad-artho, he ſaid, a fire before thy race.* Cairbar, ſoon after, died, nor did Artho long ſurvive him. Artho was ſucceeded, in the Iriſh throne, by his ſon Cormac, who, in his minority, was murdered by Cairbar, the ſon of Borba-duthul.

—— Ferad-artho, ſays tradition, was very young, when the expedition of Fingal, to ſettle him on the throne of Ireland, happened. During the ſhort reign of young Cormac, Ferad-artho lived at the royal palace of Temora. Upon the mur-

of Condan, as, grey, he bends in feeble light. He liſtens, for his foes dwell in the ecchoing halls of Temora. He comes, at times, abroad, in

murder of the king, Condan, the bard, conveyed Ferad-artho, privately, to the cave of Cluna, behind the mountain Crommal, in Ulſter, where they both lived concealed, during the uſurpation of the family of Atha. All theſe particulars, concerning Ferad-artho, may be gathered from the compoſitions of Oſſian: A bard, leſs ancient, has deliverd the whole hiſtory, in a poem juſt now in my poſſeſſion. It has little merit, if we except the ſcene between Ferad-artho, and the meſſengers of Fingal, upon their arrival, in the valley of Cluna. After hearing of the great actions of Fingal, the young prince propoſes the following queſtions concerning him, to Gaul and Dermid. —— "Is the king tall as the rock of my cave? Is his ſpear a fir of Cluna? Is he a rough-winged blaſt, on the mountain, which takes the green oak by the head, and tears it from its hill? —— Glitters Lubar within his ſtrides, when he ſends his ſtately ſteps along? —— Nor is he tall, ſaid Gaul, as that rock: nor glitter ſtreams within his ſtrides, but his ſoul is a mighty flood, like the ſtrength of Ullin's ſeas."

in the ſkirts of miſt, to pierce the bounding roes. When the ſun looks on the field, nor by the rock, nor ſtream, is he! He ſhuns the race of Bolga, who dwell in his father's hall. Tell him, that Fingal lifts the ſpear, and that his foes, perhaps, may fail.

Lift up, O Gaul, the ſhield before him. Stretch, Dermid, Temora's ſpear. Be thy voice in his ear, o Carril, with the deeds of his fathers. Lead him to green Moi-lena, to the duſky field of ghoſts; for there I fall forward, in battle, in the folds of war. Before dun night deſcends, come to high Dunmora's top. Look, from the grey rolling of miſt, on Lena of the ſtreams. If there my ſtandard ſhall float on wind, over Lubar's gleaming courſe, then has not Fingal failed in the laſt of his fields.

Such were his words: nor aught replied the ſilent, ſtriding kings. They looked ſidelong, on Erin's hoſt, and darkened, as they went. —— Never before had they left the king, in the midſt of the ſtormy field. —— Behind them, touching at times his harp, the grey-haired Carril moved. He foreſaw the fall of the people, and mournful was the ſound! —

It

It was like a breeze, that comes, by fits, over Lego's reedy lake; when ſleep half-deſcends on the hunter, within his moſſy cave.

Why bends the bard of Cona, ſaid Fingal, over his ſecret ſtream? —— Is this a time for ſorrow, father of low-laid Oſcar? Be the warriors *) remembered in peace; when ecchoing

*) Oſcar and Fillan are here, emphatically, called *the warriors*. Oſſian was not forgetful of them, *when*, to uſe his own expreſſion, *peace returned to the land*. His plaintive poems, concerning the death of theſe young heroes, were very numerous. I had occaſion, in a preceding note, to give a tranſlation of one of them, (a dialogue between Clatho and Bos-mina) in this I ſhall lay before the reader a fragment of another. The greateſt, and, perhaps, the moſt intereſting part of the poem, is loſt. What remains, is a ſoliloquy of Malvina, the daughter of Toſcar, ſo often mentioned in Oſſian's compoſitions. She ſitting alone, in the vale of Moi-lutha, is repreſented as deſcrying, at a diſtance, the ſhip which carried the body of Oſcar to Morven.

"Malvina is like the bow of the ſhower, in the ſecret valley of ſtreams; it is bright, but the

ecchoing ſhields are heard no more. Bend, then, in grief, over the flood, where blows the

drops of heaven roll on its blended light. They ſay, that I am fair within my locks, but, on my brightneſs, is the wandering of tears. Darkneſs flies over my ſoul, as the duſky wave of the breeze, along the graſs of Lutha. —— Yet have not the roes failed me, when I moved between the hills. Pleaſant, beneath my white hand, aroſe the ſound of harps. What then, daughter of Lutha, travels over thy ſoul, like the dreary path of a ghoſt, along the nightly beam? —— Should the young warrior fall, in the roar of his troubled fields! —— Young virgins of Lutha, ariſe, call back the wandering thoughts of Malvina. Awake the voice of the harp, along my ecchoing vale. Then ſhall my ſoul come forth, like a light from the gates of the morn, when clouds are rolled around them, with their broken ſides.

"Dweller of my thoughts, by night, whoſe form aſcends in troubled fields, why doſt thou ſtir-up my ſoul, thou far-diſtant ſon of the king? —— Is that the ſhip of my love, its dark courſe thro' the ridges of ocean? How art thou ſo ſudden, Oſcar, from the heath of ſhields?" ——

The

the mountain-breeze. Let them paſs on thy ſoul, the blue-eyed dwellers of Lena. —— But Erin rolls to war, wide-tumbling, rough, and dark. Lift, Oſſian, lift the ſhield. —— I am alone, my ſon!

As comes the ſudden voice of winds to the becalmed ſhip of Inis-huna, and drives it large, along the deep, dark rider of the wave: ſo the voice of Fingal ſent Oſſian, tall, along the heath. He lifted high his ſhining ſhield, in the duſky wing of war: like the broad, blank moon, in the ſkirt of a cloud, before the ſtorms ariſe.

Loud, from moſs-covered Mora, poured down, at once, the broad-winged war. Fingal led his people forth, king of Morven of ſtreams. —— On high ſpreads the eagle's wing. His grey hair is poured on his ſhoulders broad. In thunder are his mighty ſtrides. He often ſtood, and ſaw behind, the wide-gleaming rolling of armour. —— A rock he ſeemed,

The reſt of this poem, it is ſaid, conſiſted of a dialogue between Ullin and Malvina, wherein the diſtreſs of the latter is carried to the higheſt pitch.

ed, grey over with ice, whoſe woods are high in wind. Bright ſtreams leap from its head, and ſpread their foam on blaſts.

Now he came to Lubar's cave, where Fillan darkly ſlept. Bran ſtill lay on the broken ſhield: the eagle-wing is ſtrewed on winds. Bright, from withered furze, looked forth the hero's ſpear. —— Then grief ſtirred the ſoul of the king, like whirlwinds blackening on a lake. He turned his ſudden ſtep, and leaned on his bending ſpear.

White-breaſted Bran came bounding with joy to the known path of Fingal. He came, and looked towards the cave, where the blue-eyed hunter lay; for he was wont to ſtride, with morning, to the dewy bed of the roe. — It was then the tears of the king came down, and all his ſoul was dark. —— But as the riſing wind rolls away the ſtorm of rain, and leaves the white ſtreams to the ſun, and high hills with their heads of graſs: ſo the returning war brightened the mind of Fingal. He bounded *), on his ſpear, over Lubar, and ſtruck

*) The poetical hyperboles of Oſſian were, afterwards, taken in the literal ſenſe, by the ignorant vul-

ſtruck his ecchoing ſhield. His ridgy hoſt bend forward, at once, with all their pointed ſteel.

Nor

vulgar; and they firmly believed, that Fingal, and his heroes, were of a gigantic ſtature. There are many extravagant fictions founded upon the circumſtance of Fingal leaping at once over the river Lubar. Many of them are handed down in tradition. The Iriſh compoſitions concerning Fingal, invariably ſpeak of him as a giant. Of theſe Hiberniad poems there are now many in my hands. From the language, and alluſions to the times in which they were writ, I ſhould fix the date of their compoſition in the fifteenth and ſixteenth centuries. In ſome paſſages, the poetry is far from wanting merit, but the fable is unnatural, and the whole conduct of the pieces injudicious. I ſhall give one inſtance of the extravagant fictions of the Iriſh bards, in a poem which they, moſt unjuſtly, aſcribe to Oſſian. The ſtory of it is this —— Ireland being threatened with an invaſion from ſome part of Scandinavia, Fingal ſent Oſſian, Oſcar and Ca-olt, to watch the bay, in which it was exſpected, the enemy was to land. Oſcar, unluckily, fell aſleep, before the Scandinavians appeared; and, great as he was, ſays the Iriſh bard,

Nor Erin heard, with fear, the ſound: wide they came rolling along. Dark Malthos, in the wing of war, looks forward from ſhaggy brows. Next roſe that beam of light Hidalla; then the ſide-long-looking gloom of Maronnan. Blue-ſhielded Clonar lifts the ſpear; Cormar ſhakes his buſhy locks on the wind. — Slowly

bard, he had one bad property, that no leſs could waken him, before his time, than cutting off one of his fingers, or throwing a great ſtone againſt his head; and it was dangerous to come near him on thoſe occaſions, till he had recovered himſelf, and was fully awake. Ca-olt, who was employed by Oſſian to waken his ſon, made choice of throwing the ſtone againſt his head, as the leaſt dangerous expedient. The ſtone, rebounding from the hero's head, ſhook, as it rolled along, the hill for three miles round. Oſcar roſe in rage, fought bravely, and, ſingly, vanquiſhed a wing of the enemy's army. —— Thus the bard goes on, till Fingal put an end to the war, by the total rout of the Scandinavians. Puerile, and even deſpicable, as theſe fictions are, yet Keating and O' Flaherty have no better authority than the poems which contain them, for all that they write concerning Fion Mac-comnal, and the pretended militia of Ireland.

Slowly, from behind a rock, roſe the bright form of Atha. Firſt appeared his two pointed ſpears, then the half of his burniſhed ſhield: like the riſing of a nightly meteor, over the vale of ghoſts. But when he ſhone all abroad: the hoſts plunged, at once, into ſtrife. The gleaming waves of ſteel are poured on either ſide.

As meet two troubled ſeas, with the rolling of all their waves, when they feel the wings of contending winds, in the rock-ſided firth of Lumon; along the ecchoing hills is the dim courſe of ghoſts; from the blaſt fall the torn groves on the deep, amidſt the foamy path of whales: —— So mixed the hoſts. —— Now Fingal; now Cathmor came abroad. —— The dark tumbling of death is before them: the gleam of broken ſteel is rolled on their ſteps, as, loud, the high-bounding kings hewed down the ridge of ſhields.

Maronnan fell, by Fingal, laid large acroſs a ſtream. The waters gathered by his ſide, and leapt grey over his boſſy ſhield. — Clonar is pierced by Cathmor: nor yet lay the chief on earth. An oak ſeized his hair in his fall.

fall. His helmet rolled on the ground. By its thong, hung his broad ſhield; over it wandered his ſtreaming blood. Tla-min *) ſhall weep, in the hall, and ſtrike her heaving breaſt.

Nor

*) Tla-min, *mildly-ſoft*. The loves of Clonar and Tla-min were rendered famous in the north, by a fragment of a Lyric poem, ſtill preſerved, which is aſcribed to Oſſian. Be it the compoſition of whom it will, its poetical merit may, perhaps, excuſe me, for inſerting it here. It is a dialogue between Clonar and Tla-min. She begins with a ſoliloquy, which he overhears.

"Clonar, ſon of Conglas of I-mor, young hunter of dun-ſided roes! where art thou laid, amidſt ruſhes, beneath the paſſing wing of the breeze? —— I behold thee, my love, in the plain of thy own dark ſtreams! The clung thorn is rolled by the wind, and ruſtles along his ſhield. Bright in his locks he lies: the thoughts of his dreams fly, darkening, over his face. Thou thinkeſt of the battles of Oſſian, young ſon of the ecchoing iſle!

"Half-hid, in the grove, I ſit down. Fly back, ye miſts of the hill. Why ſhould ye hide her love from the blue eyes of Tla-min of harps?

Clonar.

Nor did Oſſian forget the ſpear, in the wing of his war. He ſtrewed the field with dead. —— Young Hidalla came. Soft voice of

CLONAR.

"As the ſpirit, ſeen in a dream, flies off from our opening eyes; we think, we behold his bright path between the cloſing hills: ſo fled the daughter of Clungal, from the ſight of Clonar of ſhields. Ariſe, from the gathering of trees; blue-eyed Tla-min, ariſe.

TLAMIN.

"I turn me away from his ſteps. Why ſhould he know of my love! My white breaſt is heaving over ſighs; as foam on the dark courſe of ſtreams. —— But he paſſes away, in his arms! —— Son of Conglas, my ſoul is ſad.

CLONAR.

"It was the ſhield of Fingal! the voice of kings from Selma of harps! —— My path is towards green Erin. Ariſe, fair light, from thy ſhades. Come to the field of my ſoul, there is the ſpreading of hoſts. Ariſe, on Clonar's troubled ſoul, young daughter of blue-ſhielded Clungal." ——

Clungal was the chief of I-mor, one of the Hebrides.

of ſtreamy Clonra! Why doſt thou lift the ſteel? —— O that we met, in the ſtrife of ſong, in thy own ruſhy vale! —— Malthos beheld him low, and darkened as he ruſhed along. On either ſide of a ſtream, we bend in the ecchoing ſtriſe. —— Heaven comes rolling down: around burſt the voices of ſqually winds. —— Hills are clothed, at times, in fire. Thunder rolls in wreaths of miſt. — In darkneſs ſhrunk the foe: Morven's warriors ſtood aghaſt. — Still I bent over the ſtream, amidſt my whiſtling locks.

Then roſe the voice of Fingal, and the ſound of the flying foe. I ſaw the king, at times, in lightning, darkly-ſtriding in his might. I ſtruck my ecchoing ſhield, and hung forward on the ſteps of Alnecma: the foe is rolled before me, like a wreath of ſmoak.

The ſun looked forth from his cloud. The hundred ſtreams of Moi-lena ſhone. Slow roſe the blue columns of miſt, againſt the glittering hill. — Where are the mighty kings? *) — Nor

*) Fingal and Cathmor. The conduct of the poet, in this paſſage, is remarkable. His numerous de-

Nor by that ſtream, nor wood, are they! — I hear the clang of arms! —— Their ſtrife is in the boſom of miſt. —— Such is the contending of ſpirits in a nightly cloud, when they ſtrive for the wintry wings of winds, and the rolling of the foam-covered waves.

I ruſh-

deſcriptions of ſingle combats had already exhauſted the ſubject. Nothing new, nor adequate to our high idea of the kings, could be ſaid. Oſſian, therefore, throws a *column of miſt* over the whole, and leaves the combat to the imagination of the reader. —— Poets have almoſt univerſally failed in their deſcriptions of this ſort. Not all the ſtrength of Homer could ſuſtain, with dignity, the *minutiæ* of a ſingle combat. The throwing of a ſpear, and the braying of a ſhield, as ſome of our own poets moſt elegantly expreſs it, convey no grand ideas. Our imagination ſtretches beyond, and, conſequently, deſpiſes, the deſcription. It were, therefore, well, for ſome poets, in my opinion, (tho' it is, perhaps, ſomewhat ſingular) to have, ſometimes, like Oſſian, thrown *miſt* over their ſingle combats.

I ruſhed along. The grey miſt roſe. —— Tall, gleaming, they ſtood at Lubar. —— Cathmor leaned againſt a rock. His half-fallen ſhield received the ſtream, that leapt from the moſs above. —— Towards him is the ſtride of Fingal; he ſaw the hero's blood. His ſword fell ſlowly to his ſide. —— He ſpoke, midſt his darkening joy.

Yields the race of Borbar-duthul? Or ſtill does he lift the ſpear? Not unheard is thy name, in Selma, in the green dwelling of ſtrangers. It has come, like the breeze of his deſart, to the ear of Fingal. —— Come to my hall of feaſts: the mighty fail, at times. No fire am I to low-laid foes: I rejoice not over the fall of the brave. —— To cloſe *) the wound

*) Fingal is very much celebrated, in tradition, for his knowledge in the virtues of herbs. The Iriſh poems, concerning him, often repreſent him, curing the wounds which his chiefs received in battle. They fable concerning him, that he was in poſſeſſion of a cup, containing the eſſence of herbs, which inſtantaneously healed wounds. The knowledge of curing the wounded, was, till

wound is mine: I have known the herbs of the hills. I ſeized their fair heads, on high, as they waved by their ſecret ſtreams. —— Thou art dark and ſilent, king of Atha of ſtrangers.

By Atha of the ſtreams, he ſaid, there riſes a moſſy rock. On its head is the wandering of boughs, within the courſe of winds. Dark, in its face, is a cave with its own loud rill. —— There have I heard the tread of ſtrangers *), when they paſſed to my hall of ſhells.

till of late, univerſal among the Highlanders. We hear of no other diſorder, which required the ſkill of phyſic. The wholeſomeneſs of the climate, and an active life, ſpent in hunting, excluded diſeaſes.

*) The hoſpitable diſpoſition of Cathmor was unparalleled. He reflects, with pleaſure, even in his laſt moments, on the relief he had afforded to ſtrangers. The very tread of their feet was pleaſant in his ear. —— His hoſpitality was not paſſed unnoticed by ſucceeding bards; for, with them, it became a proverb, when they deſcribed the hoſpitable diſpoſition of a hero, *that he was like Cathmor of Atha, the friend of ſtrangers.* It will ſeem ſtrange, that, in all the Iriſh

ſhells. Joy roſe, like a flame, on my ſoul: I bleſt the echoing rock. Here be my dwelling, in darkneſs, in my graſſy vale. From this I ſhall mount the breeze, that purſues my thiſtle's beard; or look down, on blue-winding Atha, from its wandering miſt.

Why ſpeaks the king of the tomb? —— Oſſian! the warrior has failed! —— Joy meet thy ſoul, like a ſtream, Cathmor, friend of ſtrangers! —— My ſon, I hear the call of years; they take my ſpear as they paſs along. Why does not Fingal, they ſeem to ſay, reſt within his hall? Doſt thou always delight in blood? In the tears of the ſad? —— No: ye darkly-rolling years, Fingal delights not in blood. Tears are wintry ſtreams that waſte away my ſoul. But, when I lie down to reſt, then comes the mighty voice of war. It awakes

traditions, there is no mention made of Cathmor. This muſt be attributed to the revolutions and domeſtic confuſions, which happened in that iſland, and utterly cut off all the real traditions concerning ſo ancient a period. All that we have related of the ſtate of Ireland before the fifth century, is of late invention, and the work of ill-informed ſenachies and injudicious bards.

es me, in my hall, and calls forth all my ſteel, —— It ſhall call it forth no more; Oſſian, take thou thy father's ſpear. Lift it, in battle, when the proud ariſe.

My fathers, Oſſian, trace my ſteps; my deeds are pleaſant to their eyes. Wherever I come forth to battle, on my field, are their columns of miſt. —— But mine arm reſcued the feeble; the haughty found, my rage was fire. Never over the fallen did mine eye rejoice. For this *) my fathers ſhall meet me, at the

*) We ſee, from this paſſage, that, even in the times of Oſſian, and, conſequently, before the introduction of chriſtianity, they had ſome idea of rewards and puniſhments after death. —— Thoſe who behaved, in life, with bravery and virtue, were received, with joy, to the airy halls of their fathers; but *the dark in ſoul*, to uſe the expreſſion of the poet, were ſpurned away *from the habitation of heroes, to wander on all the winds*. Another opinion, which prevailed in thoſe times, tended not a little to make individuals emulous to excel one another in martial atchievements. It was thought, that, in the *hall of clouds*, every one had a ſeat, raiſed above others, in proportion as he excelled them, in

the gates of their airy halls, tall, with robes of light, with mildly-kindled eyes. But, to the proud in arms, they are darkened moons in heaven, which ſend the fire of night, red-wandering over their face.

Father of heroes, Trenmor, dweller of eddying winds! I give thy ſpear to Oſſian, let thine eye rejoice. Thee have I ſeen, at times, bright from between thy clouds; ſo appear to my ſon, when he is to lift the ſpear: then ſhall he remember thy mighty deeds, though thou art now but a blaſt.

He gave the ſpear to my hand, and raiſed, at once, a ſtone on high, to ſpeak to future times, with its grey head of moſs. Beneath he placed a ſword *) in earth, and one bright boſs

valour, when he lived. —— The ſimile in this paragraph is new, and, if I may uſe the expreſſion of a bard, who alluded to it, *beautifully terrible.*

Mar dhubh-reül, an croma nan ſpeur,
A thaomas teina na h' oicha,
Dearg-ſruthach, air h'aighai' ſein,

*) There are ſome ſtones ſtill to be ſeen in the north, which were erected, as memorials of ſome re-

boſs from his ſhield. Dark in thought, a-while, he bends: his words, at length, came forth.

When thou, o ſtone, ſhalt moulder down, and loſe thee, in the moſs of years, then ſhall the traveller come, and whiſtling paſs away. — Thou know'ſt not, feeble wanderer, that fame once ſhone on Moi-lena. Here Fingal reſigned his ſpear, after the laſt of his fields. — Paſs away, thou empty ſhade; in thy voice there is no renown. Thou dwelleſt by ſome peaceful ſtream; yet a few years, and thou art gone. No one remembers thee, thou dweller of thick miſt! —— But Fingal ſhall be clothed with fame, a beam of light to other times; for he went forth, in ecchoing ſteel, to ſave the weak in arms.

Brightening in his fame, the king ſtrode to Lubar's ſounding oak, where it bent, from its rock, over the bright tumbling ſtream. Beneath it is a narrow plain, and the ſound of the

remarkable transactions between the ancient chiefs. There are generally found, beneath them, ſome piece of arms, and a bit of half-burnt wood. The cauſe of placing the laſt there, is not mentioned in tradition.

the fount of the rock. —— Here the ſtandard *) of Morven poured its wreaths on the wind, to mark the way of Ferad-artho, from his ſecret vale. —— Bright, from his parted weſt, the ſun of heaven looked abroad. The hero ſaw his people, and heard their ſhouts of joy. In broken ridges round, they glittered to the beam. The king rejoiced, as a hunter in his own green vale, when, after the ſtorm is rolled away, he ſees the gleaming ſides of the rock. The green thorn ſhakes its head in their face; from their top, look forward the roes.

**) Grey, at his moſſy cave, is bent the aged form of Clonmal. The eyes of the bard had

*) The erecting of his ſtandard on the bank of Lubar, was the ſignal, which Fingal, in the beginning of the book, promiſed to give to the chiefs, who went to conduct Ferad-artho to the army, ſhould he himſelf prevail in battle. This ſtandard here (and in every other part of Oſſian's poems, where it is mentioned) is called, the *ſun-beam*. The reaſon of this appellation, I gave, more than once, in my notes in the preceding volume.

**) The poet changes the ſcene to the valley of Lona, whither Sul-malla had been ſent, by Cathmor,

had failed. He leaned forward, on his ſtaff. Bright in her locks, before him, Sul-malla liſtened to the tale; the tale of the kings of Atha, in the days of old. The noiſe of battle had ceaſed in his ear: he ſtopt, and raiſed the ſecret ſigh. The ſpirits of the dead, they ſaid, often lightened over his ſoul. He ſaw the king of Atha low, beneath his bending tree.

Why art thou dark? ſaid the maid. The ſtrife of arms is paſt. Soon *) ſhall he come to thy cave, over thy winding ſtreams. The ſun looks from the rocks of the weſt. The miſts of the lake ariſe. Grey, they ſpread on that hill, the ruſhy dwelling of roes. From the miſt ſhall my king appear! Behold, he comes in his arms. Come to the cave of Clonmal, o my beſt beloved!

It

mor, before the battle. Clonmal, an aged bard, or rather druid, as he ſeems here to be endued with a preſcience of events, had long dwelt there, in a cave. This ſcene is awful and ſolemn, and calculated to throw a melancholy gloom over the mind.

*) Cathmor had promiſed, in the ſeventh book, to come to the cave of Clonmal, after the battle was over.

It was the ſpirit of Cathmor, ſtalking, large, a gleaming form. He ſunk by the hollow ſtream, that roared between the hills. —— "It was but the hunter, ſhe ſaid, who ſearches for the bed of the roe. His ſteps are not forth to war; his ſpouſe exſpects him with night. —— He ſhall, whiſtling, return, with the ſpoils of the dark-brown hinds." —— Her eyes are turned to the hill; again the ſtately form came down. She roſe, in the midſt of joy. He retired in miſt. Gradual, vaniſh his limbs of ſmoak, and mix with the mountain-wind. —— Then ſhe knew that he fell! "King of Erin, art thou low!" —— Let Oſſian forget her grief; it waſtes the ſoul of age *).

Even-

*) The abrupt manner, in which Oſſian quits the ſtory of Sul-malla, is judicious. His ſubject led him immediately, to relate the reſtoration of the family of Conar to the Iriſh throne; which we may conſider effectually done, by the defeat and death of Cathmor, and the arrival of Ferad-artho in the Caledonian army. To purſue, here, the ſtory of the *maid of Inis-huna*, which was foreign to the ſubject, would be altogether inconſiſtent with the rapid manner of Oſſian, and a breach

on

Evening came down on Moi-lena. Grey rolled the ſtreams of the land. Loud came forth the voice of Fingal: the beam of oaks aroſe.

on unity of time and action, one of the fundamental eſſentials of the *epopœa*, the rules of which our Celtic bard gathered from nature, not from the precepts of Critics. —— Neither did the poet totally deſert the beautiful Sul-malla, deprived of her lover, and a ſtranger, as ſhe was, in a foreign land. Tradition relates, that Oſſian, the next day after the deciſive battle between Fingal and Cathmor, went to find out Sul-malla, in the valley of Lona. His addreſs to her, which is ſtill preſerved, I here lay before the reader.

"Awake, thou daughter of Conmor, from the fern-ſkirted cavern of Lona. Awake, thou ſunbeam in deſarts; warriors one day muſt fail. They move forth, like terrible lights; but, often, their cloud is near. —— Go to the valley of ſtreams, to the wandering of herds, on Lumon; there dwells, in his lazy miſt, the man of many days. But he is unknown, Sul-malla, like the thiſtle of the rocks of roes; it ſhakes its grey beard, in the wind, and falls, unſeen of our eyes. —— Not ſuch are the kings of men, their departure is a meteor of fire, which pours

aroſe. The people gathered round with gladneſs; with gladneſs blended with ſhades. They ſide-long looked to the king, and beheld his unfiniſhed joy. —— Pleaſant, from the way of the deſart, the voice of muſic came. It ſeemed, at firſt, the noiſe of a ſtream, far-diſtant on its rocks. Slow it rolled along the hill,

pours its red courſe, from the deſart, over the boſom of night.

"He is mixed with the warriors of old, thoſe fires that have hid their heads. At times ſhall they come forth in ſong. Not forgot has the warrior failed. —— He has not ſeen, Sul-malla, the fall of a beam of his own: no fair-haired ſon, in his blood, young troubler of the field. —— I am lonely, young branch of Lumon, I may hear the voice of the feeble, when my ſtrength ſhall have failed in years, for young Oſcar has ceaſed, on his field. —— * * *

The reſt of the poem is loſt; from the ſtory of it, which is ſtill preſerved, we underſtand, that Sul-malla returned to her own country. Sul-malla makes a conſiderable figure in the poem which immediately follows in the IV. volume; her behaviour in that piece accounts for that partial regard, with which the poet ſpeaks of her throughout Temora.

hill, like the ruffled wing of a breeze, when it takes the tufted beard of the rocks, in the ſtill ſeaſon of night. —— It was the voice of Condan, mixed with Carril's trembling harp. They came with blue-eyed Ferad-artho, to Mora of the ſtreams.

Sudden burſts the ſong from our bards, on Lena; the hoſt ſtruck their ſhields midſt the ſound. Gladneſs roſe brightening on the king, like the beam of a cloudy day, when it riſes, on the green hill, before the roar of winds. — He ſtruck the boſſy ſhield of kings; at once they ceaſe around. The people lean forward, from their ſpears, towards the voice of their land *).

Sons

*) Before I finiſh my notes, it may not be altogether improper to obviate an objection, which may be made to the credibility of the ſtory of Temora, as related by Oſſian. It may be aſked, whether it is probable, that Fingal could perform ſuch actions as are aſcribed to him in this book, at an age when his grandſon, Oſcar had acquired ſo much reputation in arms. To this it may be anſwered, that Fingal was but very young [book 4th] when he took to wife Ros-crana, who ſoon after became the mother of Oſſian.

Oſſian

Sons of Morven, ſpread the feaſt; ſend the night away on ſong. Ye have ſhone around me; and the dark ſtorm is paſt. My people are the windy rocks, from which I ſpread my eagle-wings, when I ruſh forth to renown, and ſeize it on its field. —— Oſſian, thou haſt the ſpear of Fingal: it is not the ſtaff of a boy, with which he ſtrews the thiſtle round, young wanderer of the field. —— No: it is the lance of the mighty, with which they ſtretched forth their hands to death. Look to thy fathers, my ſon; they are awful beams. — With morning lead Ferad-artho forth to the ecchoing halls

Oſſian was alſo extremely young, when he married Ever-allin, the mother of Oſcar. Tradition relates, that Fingal was but eighteen years old at the birth of his ſon Oſſian; and that Oſſian was much about the ſame age, when Oſcar, his ſon, was born. Oſcar, perhaps, might be about twenty, when he was killed, in the battle of Gabhra: [book 1ſt] ſo the age of Fingal, when the deciſive battle was fought between him and Cathmor, was juſt fifty-ſix years. In thoſe times of activity and health, the natural ſtrength and vigour of a man was little abated, at ſuch an age; ſo that there is nothing improbable in the actions of Fingal, as related in this book.

halls of Temora. Remind him of the kings of Erin; the ſtately forms of old. —— Let not the fallen be forgot; they were mighty in the field. Let Carril pour his ſong, that the kings may rejoice in their miſt. —— To-morrow I ſpread my ſails to Selma's ſhaded walls; where ſtreamy Duthula winds through the ſeats of roes. ——

END of TEMORA.

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